

*G Waddell and K Burton. The Stationery Office 2006.*  
**Is work good for your health and well-being?**

Research clearly shows that being out of work leads to reduced health. Return to work leads to improved health.

The report is based on a systematic review of the scientific literature. While it has long been recognised that the rates of ill health are higher among the unemployed evidence that return to work improves health has been less clearly identified.

The main conclusions of the work are:

- Being in the right type of work is good for your health. It improves self esteem, quality of life and well-being.
- Being out of work is bad for both mind and body. Unemployment progressively damages health and results in more sickness, disability, mental illness, obesity, use of medication and medical services and decreased life expectancy.
- When people return to work from unemployment their health improves. Returning to work from unemployment improves health by as much as unemployment damages it.
- If you have a health condition, being in work can help you get better. Remaining in or returning quickly to work is beneficial for people with both physical and mental health problems.
- The positive effects of work do not just benefit the individual. Work also reduces poverty and health inequalities for the family and the community.
- Although aspects of work can pose a risk to health, far more people gain health benefits from work than are negatively affected by it. The benefits of work are also greater than the harmful effects of prolonged sickness absence.
- The positive effects apply to all age groups.



Comment

A leaflet based on these research findings is to be launched in December 2006 explaining the link between work and health and how to avoid decisions which make worklessness more likely. The leaflet is targeted at decision-makers. A complimentary leaflet for patients is to be launched early in 2007.

The research work was funded by DWP. The development of the leaflet was funded by this company [Re: Liability (Oxford) Ltd], Rolls Royce, Royal Mail, Transport for London, DWP, UNUM Provident and HCML.