

# Researched information

## on the challenges chronically ill people face in working life



About 1.9 million Finns, or more than half of the working-age population, have a long-term illness or disability. 600,000 of them find that their illness or disability is a disadvantage at work or for employment opportunities.

Several patient organizations collaborated in investigating the effects of long-term illnesses in working life. A total of 3,818 responses were received to the electronic survey conducted by Innolink in October 2020.

**Most chronically ill people can work despite their illness.**

**49 percent** estimate that their illness makes it difficult to work, find work or study on a daily or weekly basis.

**72 percent** of respondents have been able to continue in their current jobs despite the difficulties.



*Investing in work ergonomics, an understanding supervisor, and the possibility to telecommute has helped me the most*



*Substitutes are rarely brought in, so I've often tried to press on even when I've been ill.*

**Chronic illnesses, their effects and the means available to support work ability are poorly known.**

**27 percent** of respondents estimate that lack of information about their disease has created many challenges at work

**51 percent** of respondents knew about partial sickness allowance poorly or not at all. The possibilities for job accommodation and rehabilitation were almost as little known.

**People with prolonged illnesses need more support in working life.**

**55 percent** of respondents felt that they have received little or no support with their illness at work.

**37 percent** of respondents had received a lot of support from other people with illnesses for illness-related working life challenges. Peer support helps to cope.



*Difficulties and pains are easily dismissed as laziness and work avoidance.*

”

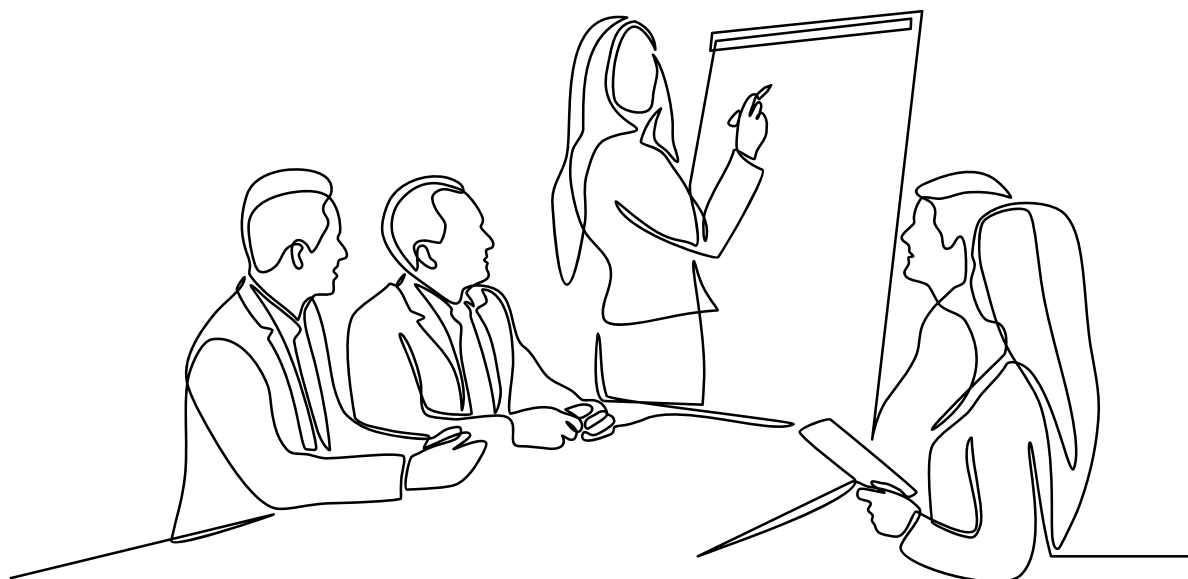
*When I have pain, co-workers and I share tasks to support that. I can work part-time when needed.*

”

*Days with illness vary, but it is not taken into account.*

”

*I am allowed to choose my shifts according to my fatigue. My work community is flexible and encouraging even towards those with partial work ability.*



## Flexible solutions needed for working life

The study shows that long-term illness does not prevent successful working life. However, various illnesses can present challenges in it.

Forms of support, such as job accommodation and rehabilitation, should be used much more in working life. Low-threshold assistance must be available when needed.

A change in attitudes is also needed. Many chronically ill feel that supervisors, co-workers, and clients do not understand

that long-term illness can affect work even when the afflicted does not have a visible disability. In a safe workplace atmosphere issues related to illness and affecting work can be discussed openly with the employer.

Employers and employees should take advantage of the knowledge and understanding that patient organizations have of the challenges faced by the chronically ill, and their solutions.

The brochure has been published in April 2021.  
Citations are from the working life survey.

Get acquainted with our services and get in touch!



[www.allergia.fi](http://www.allergia.fi)



[www.ibd.fi](http://www.ibd.fi)



[www.psori.fi](http://www.psori.fi)



[www.reumaliitto.fi](http://www.reumaliitto.fi)