Questionnaire to physicians about their sickness-certification practices

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1.	What is your highest level of medical education?
	\square Medical degree \Rightarrow Go to question 3
	Registered physician
	In resident training to become a specialist
	Board certified specialist
2.	What specfialist training are you currently undergoing?
	None
	General practice
	Anaesthesia and intensive care
	Child and adolescent (medicine, surgery, or psychiatry)
	Imaging and functional medicine
	Occupational health
	Geriatrics
	☐ Dermatology and sexually transmitted diseases
	☐ Infectious diseases
	☐ Internal medicine
	Surgery
	Laboratory medicine
	☐ Neurology
	☐ Obstetrics/Gynaecology
	Oncology
	☐ Orthopaedics
	Psychiatry/Addiction medicine
	Rehabilitation medicine
	Rheumatology
	Ophthalmic diseases
	Ear, nose, and throat disorders
	Other
3.	How long have you worked at your current place of work?
	\square < 5 years
	☐ 5–9 years
	10 years or more

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4.	At what type of clinic/pra	actice do you mainly w	ork?	
	Choose only one of the foll	lowing options.		
	Child and adolescent (r	nedicine, surgery, or psy	chiatry)	
	Occupational health		• /	
	Social insurance office	Insurance company		
	☐ Geriatrics			
	Dermatology			
	Infectious diseases			
	Internal medicine			
	Surgery			
	Neurology			
	Gynaecology/Obstetric	S		
	☐ Oncology ☐ Orthopaedics			
	Psychiatry			
	Rehabilitation			
	Rheumatology			
	Pain management			
	Primary Health Care C	entre/Family medicine		
	Ophthalmology			
	Ear, nose, and throat			
	Other type of clinic/pra	ectice		
		inistration, research, or t	eaching	
5.	In what county or region	ic vour primary place	of amployment?	
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	Blekinge	_ Jönköping	Stockholm	☐ Västernorrland
	_	Kalmar	Sörmland	☐ Västmanland
	Gotland	Kronoberg	Uppsala	☐ Västra Götaland
	Gävleborg	Norrbotten	☐ Värmland	Örebro
	Halland	Skåne	☐ Västerbotten	☐ Östergötland
	Jämtland			
	Other country	y		
6.	Does your clinical unit hat tasks?	ave a joint policy for ha	andling matters related t	to sickness certification
	Yes, and it is well estab	olished		
	Yes, but it is not well e			
	□No			
	☐ I don't know			
		t applicable, I don't wor	k in a clinical unit	
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7.	In your opinion, does the county council make effor handle patients' sickness certification? Yes, definitely	ts to impro	ove the w	ay that th	e health	services	
	Yes, to some extent No, not at all The effort is su	ıfficient [Yes [No			
8.	How often in your daily clinical work do you have c sickness certification?	consultation	ns includi	ing consid	deration (of	
	More than 20 6–20 times a 1–5 times a times a week week week	About once month	a A fe	w times a year		or almost ver	
	If you chose the response "Never or almost never", this was your <u>final</u> question. Thank you for your participation!						
9.	Is inpatient care part of your daily work?						
	□ No						
10.	What professional groups/expertise do you have acc	cess to in yo	our daily	work wit	h patient	ts?	
	Occupational therapists Psychologists			havioural	•		
	☐ Social workers ☐ Physiotherapists ☐ Physicians ☐ Nurses, midwives		• •	psychoth s, naprapa	•	fied	
				nanual th		iicu	
	Under Category						
11	When handling siglyness coutification tools a how					Never	
11.	When handling sickness certification tasks, how often do you lack time	Every day	About once a week	About once a month	A few times a year	or almost never	
	with your patients?						
	to manage patient-related aspects (e.g., issue certificates, contact stakeholders, documentation, and meetings)?						
	for further education, supervision, or reflection?						

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12.	How often in your clinical work do	More than 10 times a week	6–10 times a week	1–5 times a week	About once a month	A few times a year	Never or almost never
	you find it problematic to handle sickness certification?						
	you encounter a patient who wants to be on sick leave for some reason other than work incapacity due to disease or injury?						
	patients partly or completely say no to sick leave you suggest?						
	you say no to a patient who wants a sickness certificate?						
	you refer/send patients to occupational health services?						
	you issue a sickness certificate so that a patient will be eligible for higher benefit than unemployment or welfare benefits?						
	you experience conflicts with patients about sickness certification?						
	you worry that a patient will report you, to e.g. a disciplinary board, regarding sickness certification?						
	you feel threatened by a patient in connection with sickness certification?						
	you issue sickness certificates to patients without seeing them (e.g., by telephone)?						
	you worry that patients will go to another physician if you don't issue a sickness certificate?						
	patients say that they will change physician if you don't issue a sickness certificate?						
	you apply the newly introduced national sickness certification guidelines?						
	you have time scheduled, alone or with colleagues, for supervision/feedback/reflection regarding sickness certification issues?						
	you or your health care team participate in coordination meetings with social insurance and/or employer regarding sickness certified patients?						
	you or your care team have contact with employers in ways other than via the coordination meetings?						
	you collaborate with or refer patients to social workers and/or psychologists in sickness-certification cases?						

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	How often in your clinical work do	More than 10 times a week	6–10 times a week	1–5 times a week	About once a month	times	Never or almost never
	you collaborate with or refer patients to physical or occupational therapists in sickness-certification cases?						
	you confer with other physicians when handling cases involving sickness certification?						
	you have contact with social services regarding sickness-certification cases?						
	you have contact with the employment offices regarding sickness-certification cases?						
	you lack for someone (e.g., a coach or case manager) who coordinates measures for the patients?						
13.	How often do you certify unnecessarily long sick- leave periods due to	Every day	•	e a on		A few times a year	Never or almost never
	lack of next visit times?] [
	waiting times for investigation by health care services?] [
	waiting for investigation by the social insurance office (SIO)?] [
	waiting for investigation by the unemployment office?] [
	waiting for measures taken by an employer?] [
	waiting times for treatment?] [
	lack of access to cognitive behavioural therapy?] [
	lack of other adequate treatment and/or care provider? (Comments can be given on page 12)] [
	that the patient does not follow recommendations for treatment and rehabilitation?	. 🗆] [
	you want to avoid conflicts with the patient?] [
	it takes too long to explain the alternatives to being on sick leave?] [

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...the influence of other members of your healthcare

team?

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14.	How problematic do you generally find it to		Very	Fairly	Some- what	Not at all
	handle sickness certification of patients?					
	assess whether a patient's functioning is reduced	?				
	assess whether the reduced functioning is due to injury?	disease or				
	assess the degree to which the reduced functionin patient's work capacity?	ng limits a				
	discuss with the patient the advantages and disad of being on sick leave?	vantages				
	suggest a plan of action and/or measures to be taken the sick leave?	ken during				
	provide a long-term prognosis about the future w capacity of patients on sick leave?	ork				
	manage the two roles as the patient's treating phy and as a medical expert for the social insurance off other authorities?					
	discuss possible lifestyle and life situation change patient that you sickness certify?	es with a				
	discuss and know how to deal with other psychos problems (e.g., economic difficulties or physical or substance abuse) when handling a patient on sick le	•				
	know what aspects of the sickness-certification post documented in the patient's medical file?	know what aspects of the sickness-certification process to be documented in the patient's medical file?				
	handle prolongation of a sick-leave period initiall certified by another physician?	ly				
	assess the optimum duration and degree (part or for sickness absence?	full time)				
	handle situations in which you and a patient have opinions about the need for sick leave?	different				
	write sickness certificates for the Social Insurance	e Office?				
	write other certificates for the Social Insurance O	office?				
	adhere to the national overarching sickness certification guidelines?	Have not used those guidelines				
	issue sickness certificates in accordance with the national diagnosis-specific sickness certification guidelines?	Have not used those guidelines				
	handle situations in which you and other members of the health care team have different opinions about sickness certifying a patient?	Not applicable				

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15.	In general, how satisfied are you regarding your contacts with the social insurance office (SIO)? Very satisfied Somewhat satisfied Very dissatisfied Have no contacts with the SIO
	How often do you usually have contact with SIO staff concerning sickness certification cases?
	Do not include writing sickness certificates
	☐ Daily ☐ Once or a few times a week ☐ About once a month ☐ A few times a year ☐ Never or almost never
	Do you have regular, scheduled contacts with the SIO? (e.g., coordinating meetings, rehabilitation meetings, or SIO officers at your practice)
	Yes, to a satisfactory degree
	Yes, but you would prefer more extensive contact
	No, but you would like to
	No, not needed
	How easy/difficult do you find it is to get in touch with SIO case officers?
	Not relevant
	☐ Very easy
	Fairly easy
	Neither easy nor difficult
	Fairy difficult
	☐ Very difficult

16. What difficulties, if any, do you experience in your contacts with the Social Insurance Office (SIO)?								
	Choose one or more options.							
	no such difficulties							
	☐ It takes too much time							
	☐ It's difficult to find out who to talk to							
	☐ It's difficult to get through by phone							
	☐ The SIO is closed when you have time for contact							
	☐ The SIO staff do not contact you, even if you ask them to							
	☐ The SIO doesn't coordinate rehabilitation measures							
	☐ The SIO doesn't contact the patients							
	You encounter a negative attitude from SIO							
	You seem to speak different languages							
	Ambiguities concerning matters of confidentiality							
	Patients are often assigned new SIO case officers (lack of continuity)							
	SIO case officers question you/your assessments							
	SIO medical officers question you/your assessments							
	☐ It's difficult to convey information through the pre-printed SIO f	forms for me	dical certific	ates				
	Different interpretations of the new national sickness certification	n guidelines						
	☐ The patient is negative towards you contacting the SIO							
	Other problems (<i>Please give comments on p. 12</i>)							
17.	Considering your future contacts with the SIO, how important are the following options? You will not be in contact with the SIO $\square \Rightarrow Go \text{ to question } 18$	Very important	Fairly important	Not important at all				
	More coordinating meetings (e.g., with the SIO, the employer, or the employment office, and the patient)							
	Fewer coordinating meetings							
	General dialogue about sickness certification and insurance medicine							
	Regular, scheduled meetings at the SIO to discuss patients							
	Regular, scheduled meetings at your practice							
	Regular, scheduled meetings at your practice Contact by e-mail and/or the Internet (possibly encrypted)							
	Contact by e-mail and/or the Internet (possibly encrypted)							
	Contact by e-mail and/or the Internet (possibly encrypted) Contact by ordinary mail							
	Contact by e-mail and/or the Internet (possibly encrypted) Contact by ordinary mail Contact by telephone A contact person that you can quickly reach when necessary SIO case officers at your practice							
	Contact by e-mail and/or the Internet (possibly encrypted) Contact by ordinary mail Contact by telephone A contact person that you can quickly reach when necessary							

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	To get information from the SIO about their handling decisions regarding patients you have issued certificate		[
	decisions regarding patients you have issued certificate	C 101				
18.	Do the new national sickness certification guidelines and Welfare facilitate your contacts with	s provide	d by the	National	Board of	Health
		Y	es	No		
	healthcare staff?					
	patient's workplace or employment office?					
	your patient?					
	the SIO?					
	☐ I don't use the indicated guidelines					
	Please, on page 12 give your views give your views on certification guidelines need to be further developed!	whether d	ınd how t	he nation	al sicknes	SS
19.	To what extent have the following helped you to develop your competence in handling sickness-certification cases?	To a large extent	To a fairly large extent	To some extent	Not at all	Not relevant
	Undergraduate studies					
	Internship					
	Resident training					
	Further training arranged by the county council					
	Education/training opportunities other than those listed above					
	Your own searches for information (e.g., in the literature or the Internet)					
	Contacts with other physicians and/or other healthcare staff					
	Contacts with patients					
	Contacts with Social Insurance Office staff					
	Training arranged by the Social Insurance Office					
	Contacts with employers					
	Information via media					
	Targeted information efforts (e.g., made by a regional sickness certification committee)					
	Teaching and supervising others about these issues					
	Conferences, seminars					
	The newly introduced national sickness certification guidelines					

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20.	To what extent do you need to further develop your competence in relation to the following?	To a large extent	To a fairly large extent	To some extent	Not at all
20.	Assessing patients' functioning				
	Assessing patients' work capacity				
	The demands made on employees in different occupations and/or workplaces				
	Assessing the optimum length and degree of sickness absence				
	Handling conflicts with patients about the need for sickness certification				
	Writing sickness certificates				
	Designing optimum plans of action				
	Deciding when there is a need to contact the Social Insurance Office				
	Sickness insurance rules and laws				
	Other types of compensation in the social insurance system (e.g., rehabilitation allowance, disablement benefit, disability pension)				
	Private and supplementary insurances that patients often have				
	Your options and responsibilities as a physician in sickness certification cases				
	The options and responsibilities of the Social Insurance Office in sickness certification cases				
	Employers' options and responsibilities in sickness certification cases				
	The options and responsibilities of the Employment Office in sickness certification cases				
	Using the new national sickness certification guidelines				
	Gender aspects of sickness certification				
	Other aspects of diversity that can be related to sickness certification				
	The various possibilities in society regarding handling psychosocial problems				

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21.	How do you value the following options with regard to ensuring high quality of your handling of sickness certification cases?	Very beneficial	Moderately beneficial	Not beneficial
	Contacts with fellow physicians and/or other healthcare staff			
	Contacts with patients' employers and visits to workplaces			
	Supervision/being tutored			
	Collaborative or coordinating meetings			
	Contacts with medical officers at the Social Insurance Office			
	Contacts with case officers at the Social Insurance Office			
	The national diagnosis-specific sickness certification guidelines			
	A joint instrument/protocol for assessment of work capacity			
	Written information (e.g., books, brochures, articles)			
	Information from the Internet			
	Courses in insurance medicine			
	Courses in conflict management			
	Conferences, seminars			
	Having opportunities to contact experts in insurance medicine			
	Getting a second opinion from other physician regarding a patient			
	Getting statistics on your issued sickness certificates over the past year			
	Getting statistics on issued sickness certificates at your unit/practice over the past year			
	Better information to the general public about the sickness insurance system			
	Receiving higher remuneration for issuing sickness certificates			
	A forum in which you can reflect on your work with sickness certification			
22.	Do sickness certification tasks constitute a work environmen Yes, to a great extent Yes, to some extent No	t problem fo	or you?	
23.	Do you have support from your immediate manager at your certification cases? Yes, substantial support Yes, some support No No applicable, don't have a manager Not applicable, don't work at a clinical unit	practice/clin	nic regarding	sickness

Thank you very much for your participation!

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Space for your own comments:

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