

Predictors for return to work in patients with median and ulnar nerve injuries. Bruyns CN, Jaquet JB, Schreuders TA, Kalmijn S, Kuypers PD, Hovius SE. J Hand Surg Am. 2003 Jan;28(1):28-34.

Abstract

PURPOSE:

One of the consequences of median and ulnar nerve trauma is delayed return to work. The aim of this study was to determine return to work (RTW) and risk factors for delayed RTW in addition to time off work (TOW). Differences among median, ulnar, and combined median-ulnar nerve injuries were examined.

METHOD:

In this study 96 patients who were employed at the time of injury and who had undergone surgery for median, ulnar, or combined nerve injuries between 1990 and 1998 were evaluated. The response rate was 84% (n = 81).

RESULTS:

Within 1 year after injury, 59% (n = 48) returned to work. Mean TOW was 31.3 weeks. Return to work after combined nerve injuries was 24% versus after isolated median (80%) and ulnar (59%) nerve injuries. Level of education, type of job, and compliance to hand therapy were predictors for RTW. Furthermore, grip strength loss, tip pinch strength loss, and sensory recovery differed strongly between the RTW and no- RTW population.

CONCLUSIONS:

The predictors found in this study increase our understanding of delayed RTW after median and ulnar nerve injury and may be used to optimize postinjury rehabilitation.