

# Many head and neck cancer survivors don't return to work

April 9 2015

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(HealthDay)—Many head and neck cancer survivors do not return to work, according to a study published in the April issue of *Head & Neck*.

Robert Koch, M.D., from Jena University Hospital in Germany, and colleagues examined employment and psychological factors in head and neck survivors with survivorship of at least two years. A survey was administered to 55 [head](#) and [neck cancer](#) survivors, aged 60 years or younger, including subscales from the Functional Assessment of Cancer Therapy (FACT) instrument, the Miller Behavioral Style Scale, the General Perceived Self-Efficacy Scale, the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9), and the Hornheider-Fragebogen short version.

The researchers observed a decrease in the rate of employed patients, from three-quarters of patients before diagnosis to one-third at an average of 66.8 months after diagnosis. There was a correlation between current unemployment with harder physical work before diagnosis, surgical treatment, and current risky alcohol consumption. Decreased FACT functional and social well-being and higher PHQ depression scores were reported among unemployed survivors.

"The likelihood not to return to work is high after [head and neck cancer](#) treatment," the authors write. "Beyond standard rehabilitation programs, the development of specific psychosocial interventions for this patient group may be warranted to support the patients' to return to work."

**More information:** [Abstract](#)  
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Citation: Many head and neck cancer survivors don't return to work (2015, April 9) retrieved 19 November 2023 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-04-neck-cancer-survivors-dont.html>

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