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The Weller-Database

(How to Identify the Right / Real Cases to Control Through Disability Management)

The most successful tool for rehabilitation management in the field of statutory accident insurance in Germany is the Weller-Database. This computer-based expert system, that is also used by private insurance institutions, ensures an optimal rehabilitation management process, clearly reducing the return-to-work period.

Effective rehabilitation management following (occupational) injuries is a main issue to statutory accident insurance institutions in Germany. The objective is to optimize the use of financial resources by the insurer and the results of the rehabilitation process for the insured persons. The Weller-Database – started over ten years ago and constantly developed and adapted to integrate new findings on the medical side and also efficient return-to-work approaches – has become the standard system for controlling the reha process (medical and occupational rehabilitation). Selective use of the expert system results in reducing the periods being absent from work while at the same time improving the quality of the rehabilitation results.

The expert system classifies all injuries according to medically relevant aspects (based on ICD and OPS classifications). The Weller-Key then puts injuries (e.g. fractures and/or soft tissue injuries) into the categories light, middle and severe. Within these degrees of severity,

information is provided on the common methods of treatment depending on the type of injury. The database provides the sick leave prognoses with maximum periods of absence from work in case of a healing process without complications for each injury. The prognoses take into account the patient's profession and are subject to continuous validation – based on an ever increasing number of cases/injuries documented by German insurance carriers.

Intermediate control dates are computed on the basis of the final date forecast. The controlling schedule established allows for a standardized intervention system. Results have shown that a timely intervention - combined with more intensive curative treatment, if appropriate - leads to complete the medical rehabilitation in a shorter period of time, with good qualitative results.

The database comprises the following additional advisory elements:

- General information on each injury pattern (diagnostics, necessary additional findings, anatomy, etc.).
- Need for treatment in hospitals with special accreditation.
- Typical complications and corresponding action.
- Warning signals for case management, including possible professional reeducation.
- Allocation of the AO classification.
- Information on expedient rehabilitation measures (physiotherapy, ergotherapy, etc.) and provision of assistive technology.

In the last years, the system has developed into a competent and indispensable advisory basis in case management. The Weller-Keys and standardized validation procedures enable the earliest possible identification of challenging cases. Additionally “outliers” (“worst cases”) can be identified at a stage early enough, so that corrective intervention is possible.