

WorkCoverSA's Better Outcomes Research Project – new pilot

WorkCoverSA and Employers Mutual are commencing a pilot called the **Better Outcomes Research Project** aimed at identifying workers who have a high probability of developing a long-term disability and working with treating doctors to identify capacity for safe and suitable return to work. In this pilot, the risk of long-term disability is defined as the probability of a worker not returning to full-time work 12 months after injury.

The **Better Outcomes Research Project** is a medical practitioner peer-to-peer pilot which identifies high-risk workers certified as unfit for work four to 13 weeks post date of injury. The pilot will focus on supporting treating doctors who have limited experience with WorkCover claimants or work in clinics with only small WorkCover claimant workloads.

A prognosis tool has been developed to identify workers at risk of long-term disability based on a number of key risk factors. WorkCover data was used to determine the key risk factors for long-term disability and these include:

- high-risk injury groups
- number of scripts for specific analgesics and mental health drugs
- hospital admissions
- number of WorkCover medical certificates
- number of physiotherapy visits.

This tool has been tested with retrospective data and appears to be highly effective in predicting the probability of long-term disability.

On identification of a high-risk worker, medical practitioner advisors recruited by WorkCover will liaise directly with the treating doctor to discuss the workers risk probability, their current *WorkCover Medical Certificate* and ways to prevent long-term disability.

The **Better Outcomes Research Project** will run for eight weeks commencing in June 2010. An evaluation of the pilot will be undertaken at its completion and, if successful, this pilot may develop into a core business function. For more information on this pilot, contact WorkCover's Health Provider Services on 13 18 55.

