Introduction
Return to work (RtW) can provide an important venue for community integration and social participation. In order for RtW to be effectively evidence-based and person-centered after spinal cord injury (SCI) more knowledge of the individual experience is needed.

This is a follow up study of; Returning to work after spinal cord injury: exploring young adults’ early expectations and experience (Bergmark, Westgren, Asaba, 2011). A qualitative interview study with young adults who had not returned to work after SCI. The study revealed high expectations of work but difficulties to pursue RtW.

Aim
The aim was to explore experiences of RtW processes over a 6-year period among young adults with SCI.

Method
Qualitative in-depth interviews and observations based on a narrative approach were used to gather data. Software Atlas.ti 6.0 was used during qualitative thematic analyses.

Participants
6 men and 2 women (N=8) with traumatic SCI, previously interviewed 2008, were included in the study.

Preliminary findings
1-5 years post injury participants expressed a desire and expectation for RtW, however 7-11 years post injury RtW was described as not prioritized or possible for some. A challenge to RtW was uncertainty in relation to health, economy, and possibilities to obtain meaningful employment after SCI. Paid work were exchanged for non-paid engaging activities that offered flexibility and control however limited social interaction. When vocational rehabilitation is not sufficiently person-centered and socially relevant challenges in RtW become pronounced for the person with SCI.

Conclusion
• RtW would benefit from being person-centered and initiated early as an integrated part of rehabilitation. Both to avoid long-term absence from labour market and to decrease uncertainty related to working ability.

• A coach model may offer continuous and person-centered rehabilitation as well as follow-up over time.

• Measures for re-adaptation to meaningful and suitable employment after injury is important to avoid lock-in effects as a barrier in RtW.