Anders Westman is a physician and specialist in family medicine and occupational health. He has been practicing medicine mainly in primary health care and the occupational health service. For the last ten years he has been employed at the Psychosomatic Medicine Clinic in Västerås, Sweden working with the rehabilitation of patients with musculoskeletal pain and stress-related disorders. His main research interests are in the field of musculoskeletal pain, stress and psychosomatic medicine.

Long-term musculoskeletal pain is a large public health problem with serious consequences for both the individual and society. Psychosocial factors have been shown to be good predictors of long-term disability and play an important role in the transition from acute to chronic pain. For general practitioners it is often a challenge to decide which assessment to use and to know which patient is at risk of developing a long-term problem. When do we choose the right method to the “right” patient at the right time? This dissertation focuses on the need of a biopsychosocial approach to the assessment and treatment of musculoskeletal pain patients in primary health care. Early identification and intervention of those that run the risk of developing long-term disability would offer a great opportunity for reducing costs and personal suffering. Identifying homogeneous subgroups, defined by their variation in psychosocial factors, may improve the secondary prevention of musculoskeletal pain problems because the treatment could be adjusted according to both pain and psychosocial factors.