Reviewer's report

Title: Occupational stressors and its organizational and individual correlates: A nationwide study of Norwegian ambulance personnel

Version: 3 Date: 24 July 2008

Reviewer: Adrian Boyle

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for asking my opinion on this interesting and potentially important paper.

This is a cross-sectional survey with a low response rate, examining associations between various psychological scales. The authors have used appropriate tests for this study. The main issues are about the reporting of the results.

The points that Dr Shakespeare-Finch have raised need discussion.

Major compulsory revisions

1. The response rate needs to be based on the 1005 samples, this needs to be made more explicit.

2. (Point 4 relating to table 3) Table 3 is difficult to understand, I think, given the likely readership of the paper (Emergency Physicians, Occupational Physicians and Psychologists) more effort needs to be put into the text to explain what these results mean. I accept the authors’ assertion about the efficiency of presenting a large amount of information. I also accept the authors’ compromise about the Bonferroni correction. While Dr Shakespeare-Finch’s comments on this point are technically correct, the overall impact of the suggested changes is unlikely to be important.

3. (Point 2 relating to tables 4 and 5) I accept the author’s assertions about the regression analysis and demonstration of this. However, the authors are vulnerable to accusations of post hoc analysis in view of the way they have removed variables, notably organisational factors, from their model. Dr Shakespeare-Finch’s request for hierarchal regression is appropriate. The authors should consider performing some form of stepwise regression on this data. This would improve the quality of their results. I accept that the overall conclusions are unlikely to very different.

4. (Point 2 and 3 relating to reporting degrees of freedom with t-tests) The authors have done this, but I feel this data is better presented alongside the tables. Some of the results have strayed into the methods section of the paper.

5. Dr Shakespeare-Finch is correct in asking the authors to make more of the psychological significance rather than the clinical significance. It is not enough to demonstrate that an association exists, this sort of work needs a measure of how strong this association is (and hence how much should be done about it)
**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests'