Reviewer’s report

Title: Sociodemographic and occupational risk factors associated with the development of different burnout types: the cross-sectional University of Zaragoza study

Version: 1 Date: 15 November 2010

Reviewer: Pedro Gil-Monte

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Major Compulsory Revisions:

This paper explores the possible associations between burnout types and general sociodemographic and occupational characteristics. This is a potentially interesting paper evaluating the subtypes of burnout. I appreciate the effort that has been put into performing this study, but unfortunately the paper has a number of flaws that impede its publication. I give some suggestions below, if the authors decide to rewrite the paper for publication elsewhere.

1. The Introduction section offers a definition of burnout according to Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter (2001). However, the study evaluates burnout according to other definition. The authors should establish a fit between the concept and the estimated construct.

2. The authors used an uncommon measure of burnout. It is my understanding that the first publication describing its validating process is going to appear this year. Therefore, it is not going to be accessible to most readers. The Introductory and Methods sections do not provide any details about this new measure. They did not describe its underlying theoretical backbone, evidence for its validity, or rationale for including in their burnout construct components which were not considered by any other known measure of burnout. More empirical evidence is necessary to conclude about the psychometrical properties (i.e., reliability and validity) of a questionnaire. On the other hand, the BCSQ-36 contains 36 items distributed into 9 subscales, but the sample to validate the questionnaire were 409 participants (Montero-Marín & García-Campayo, 2010). In addition, those participants are the same included in the present study.

3. The study should offer some hypotheses on the expected relationships between independents and dependents variables. The review of the literature must be improved taking into consideration previous studies about sociodemographic and occupational characteristics, and its relationships with job burnout.

4. The Methodology section must show some information about the BCSQ-36 –i.e., some example of items, Cronbach alpha values for all subscales…

5. The size of the sample should be clarified. The participants section indicates that the sample were 427 individuals, but Table 1 and Results indicate n = 409

6. The authors do not provide any empirical or theoretical evidence about the cut
points applied to classify participants into levels and subtypes of burnout. On the contrary, that decision seems arbitrary. The study considers that participants higher than P75 are burnout cases (pp. 6-7). However, other studies by applying validated questionnaires have suggested other criteria (Maslach & Jackson, 1986; Schaufeli, Bakker, Hoogduin & Kladler, 2001; Schaufeli & Dierendonck, 1995; Shirom, 1989)

References:
Schaufeli, W.B., Van Dierendonck, D., 1995. A cautionary note about the cross national and clinical validity of cut off points for the Maslach Burnout Inventory. Psychological Reports 73, 1083-1090.

7. The study should provide some information about the descriptive statistics for the subscales.

8. The study should clearly delimitate their contributions to the advancement of knowledge. It does not provide enough significant results, and the obtained results do not contribute to validate the model or the questionnaire. Some questions remain without answer: What are the theoretical relationships between the independent variables and subtypes of burnout? How this study contributes to the advancement of knowledge?. According to Farber model, demographic variables do not determine the subtypes of burnout. Those subtypes are related to the stressors and coping strategies. Then, why do not evaluate these variables as independent variables? In Discussion section are suggesting that the contract type, occupation, and gender determine the burnout type. How to carry out an intervention on the independent variables considered in the study?

9. The authors must include the study's limitations, and some practical contributions.

Level of interest: An article of insufficient interest to warrant publication in a scientific/medical journal

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' below.