Reviewer's report

Title: Are self-report of disability pension and long-term sickness absence accurate? Comparisons of self-reported interview data with national register data in a Swedish twin cohort

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Reviewer: Camilla Ihlebaek

Reviewer's report:

This is a well-written and well conducted study, investigating methodological issues concerning the use of self-reported data contra register data. The study is of great interest and the findings are useful for future research on sickness absence and disability pension.

However, I have some comments and questions that might be useful to consider:

Minor Essential Revisions

1. As I understand it, the paper describes two different aims of the study; 1. To consider the agreement between self-reported data on long-term sickness absence (LTSA) and disability pension (DP) and 2. To investigate the genetic/environmental influence on reporting behavior on LTSA and DP.

First, I do not feel that the title reflects or prepare the reader for the second aim. Secondly, I have some objections with the second aim, at least as it is currently presented in the paper. I understand and appreciate that the second aim is interesting in a broader context, in other words - to investigate nature-nurture influences of reporting behavior in itself. However, I am not sure that it is of equal interest to focus (to this extent) on the finding that we can trust self-reported data on LTSA and DP equally in monozygote and heterozygote twin pairs. And further, the finding that genes do not seem to influence reporting behavior on these specific issues. Perhaps these findings would be more justified if presented in a broader context of genetic/environmental influence on reporting patterns in a separate paper?

2. You present a hypothesis for aim 2, but not for aim 1. Either you should include hypotheses for both aims, or not include hypotheses all together. If you choose to postulate hypothesis for the aims, the empirical rational for the hypotheses should be given in the introduction.

3. I had a really hard time understanding how many participants that were actually included in the ‘agreement’ analyses of LTSA and DP. The flow-chart was of great help, however when reading the ‘participants’ section in the ‘Method’ chapter, a lot of space is used to describe the total SALT population, and the reader could easily get the impression that you have used n=12129 in (all) the analyses. It might be better to reduce the overall information on the total study
population in SALT, and include more information on the number of participants used in the analyses in this specific study. It would also help to include n in table 1.

4. It would be interesting to have more descriptive data of the sample that was actually included, for instance age, education and reason (diagnoses) for LTSA/DP. If you have such data, it would also be interesting to investigate if the agreement between self-reported data and register data differs between age groups, educational groups and diagnostic groups.

3 The discussed weakness of the study by not quantifying ‘long-term’ for the respondents on page 11, should be moved to the paragraph of methodological considerations (limitations and strengths) in the end of the manuscript.

4. Make sure there is a consistent use of the term ‘sickness absence’ (if that is what you want to use). Now there is a mixture of ‘sickness absence’ and ‘sick leave’ both in the text and in the table texts.

5. At least in my view, it is more logical to present LTSA before DP, both in the title and in the results.

6. In Figure 1 the ‘DP-line’ (DP in SALT, Not DP in SALT or MiDAS, and DP in MiDAS at time of....) does not add up to n=31122 but to n=31121. What happened to that one person?

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests