Reviewer's report

Title: Sickness absence in musculoskeletal disorders - patients' experiences of interactions with the Social Insurance Agency and health care. A qualitative study.

Version: 1 Date: 2 December 2010

Reviewer: Ole Steen S Mortensen

Reviewer's report:

The paper is an interesting paper on a important issue with a great relevance in the field of public health. I have some suggestions for clarification.

The background for the study is short and clear. The purpose of the study is clear, however, the issue of facilitating and obstructing factors need to be better justified in the background.

The sampling of informants need to be better described and the authors must justify why they do not make a strategic sampling of informants. The content of the interview guide must also be presented in the methods section.

The data analysis is very well described and I have no suggestions here.

The interpretation of the results is clear, but it is difficult for the reader to follow the conclusions when the interviewguide is not available. I would also prefer more citations to strengthen the interpretation.

It would be useful to know the authors definition of rehabilitation.

The discussion and conclusion is well balanced but the authors need to discuss the sampling problems more in depth.

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'