Reviewer’s report

Title: Prevalence of low back pain and associated occupational factors among Chinese coal miners

Version: 6 Date: 3 December 2011

Reviewer: Chris Jensen

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The paper has been improved considerably, but some problems remain.

Major compulsory

1. It is not a risk factor study and it is not possible to add knowledge on the aetiology of LBP in a cross-sectional study. Therefore, the following quotations are still problematic:

From Background

"Interestingly, the study identified associated moisture, ventilation and trauma to be associated with LBP among these miners[8], suggesting the potential role of occupational factors in the aetiology of back pain. However, few studies have reported associations with other risk factors."

"..with the aim of providing insight as to the aetiology of back pain"

From Discussion:

"In accordance with the epidemiological literature[16,19,21,23], extreme bending posture was an important risk factor for LBP."

From Conclusions:

"In particular, the abnormal posture is was one of the most important risk factors for LBP."

2. Furthermore, the authors still state that recall bias may be present because workers with pain remember exposures more accurately that those without pain. Maybe this is true, but it is more important that workers with pain perceive exposures to be more extreme or adverse than workers without pain, which should be mentioned in the discussion.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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