Reviewer's report

Title: Can work ability explain the social gradient in sickness absence: a cross-sectional study of a general working population in Sweden

Version: 3 Date: 19 January 2012

Reviewer: Marianna Virtanen

Reviewer's report:

The authors have succeeded well in improving the manuscript. There is still one minor point I don't agree with them, the term "incidence". You have cases for a couple of months' period and baseline exclusion period is less than 2 months (as it seems to be). Incidence of a disease is the rate at which new cases occur in a population during a specified period. Usually incidence refers to the first episode of a disease among a healthy population (cohort). If you use the term incidence you should be able to report incidence rate among the followed study cohort.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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.