Reviewer's report

Title: Agreement between sickness benefit data from a Danish national register and multiple workplace-registered long-term sick leave spells in a Danish municipality: a validation study.

Version: 1 Date: 10 April 2012

Reviewer: Thomas Lund

Reviewer's report:

Dear authors, thank you for letting me review your work. In my opinion, you have written a relevant, clear ms, which will make a valid contribution to its filed when published. I have a couple of minor suggestions, that you might consider:

1. Firstly, the intro is a little too lengthy, at least to this reader. Kudos for having performed a thorough literature search and for presenting the results so thoroughly, but I think you could easily go more straight to the point, and leave the results of each of the studies for the discussion - where some of it is actually repeated in the current version. You go a long way to justifying the study - and that is not needed.

2. You argue for your study by claiming that a lot of DREAM based studies on sickness absence call for a validation study. A large part of the studies you include and refer to carefully make the point, that sickness absence compensation and sickness absence are not the same. This does not make your study less needed, but in my opinion it is more a question of investigating to which degree there is an overlap between these two sides of occupational ill health.

3. In the discussion, on page 21: You might like to add "30 days after January 2012" in the parenthesis at the top of the page.

4. I don't understand the phrase "Along with others we consider these highly reliable (5-8)" bottom p3. Who are "we"? The authors or humanity as such?

5. Which leads to: I actually don't share your unpartial enthusiasm to employer registrations of absence. Your data stem from a municipal employer, where large units, systematization and registration in all kinds of forms are a crucial part of work organization, and has been so for years. Assuming that this way of registering is the same in all business sectors and companies would be optimistic, and I don't think you acknowledge this in your ms. In my opinion there's rarely a truth in registration, and therefore the whole idea of benchmarking and validating is artificial. BUT, there is a huge need for investigating if different measures measure alike, which you have done. And you have done this well, so call it what you like.
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:
No competing interests