Author's response to reviews

Title: Work capacity and health-related quality of life among individuals with multiple sclerosis reduced by fatigue: A cross-sectional study

Authors:

Gullvi Flensner (gullvi.flensner@hv.se)
Anne-Marie Landtblom (anne-marie.landtblom@lio.se)
Olle Söderhamn (olle.soderhamn@uiia.no)
Anna-Christina Ek (anna-christina.ek@liu.se)

Version: 2 Date: 12 January 2013

Author's response to reviews: see over
Responses to the comments received by the Editor and the Referees’

Thank you for alerting us on some errors and missing or unclear parts in our manuscript. We have considered each comment and made alterations described below and marked in red font in the text.

Inquiry concerning “a typing mistake in the section describing the participants on page 10”

Response: Thank you for alerting us on this embarrassing error of the description of the participants. The percents of the participants should be 76.3% women and 23.7% men, which now is corrected in the manuscript.

Inquiries and comments from Referee 1:

1. Regarding number of words in the Abstract

Response: Thank you for alerting us on the exceeding number of words in the Abstract. According to authors’ guidelines, however, 350 words are allowed. In this revised version of the manuscript, we have omitted some sentence and rewritten parts of the text. The number of words in this version is 343.

2. Regarding the length of the Introduction

Response: We have deleted one sentence in the beginning of the Introduction, but, also added text and references in line with the comments and suggestions received from the referees. Subsequently the length of the Introduction actually has been slightly expanded. Our ambition has also been to follow the recommendation in authors’ guidelines and introduce the topic for readers with a non-expert knowledge in the field.

3. Regarding our choice of SF-36

Response: We choose SF-36 as it is a generic and a widely used instrument. It has been used in several studies world-wide, and therefore an interpretation of the results might be easier for the reader. Furthermore, by using SF-36, it will also be possible to compare HRQoL in the studied group with other groups in a future. However, one limitation of SF-36 is that it does not cover specific MS-symptoms. We have added some comments about that in the limitations of the study.

In addition, when collecting the data, a list of perceived common MS-symptoms actually was completed by the participants. These symptoms have been analyzed and presented in relation to heat sensitivity in a previous article: Flensner G, Ek A-C, Söderhamn O, Landtblom AM: Sensitivity to heat in MS patients: a factor strongly influencing symptomology – an exploratory survey, BMC Neurol, 2011, 11:27 [doi:10.1186/1471-2377-11-27].
**Inquiries and comments from Referee 2:**

**Major Compulsory Revisions**

1. **Inquiry about missing limitations of the study**  
   **Response:** Thank you for alerting us on this mistake, which we unfortunately had overlooked and we do agree to your suggestion. We have added a section with description of limitations of the study in the end of the manuscript.

2. **Inquiry of revision of prior studies**  
   **Response:** Thank you for this suggestion, which we have followed and added some further results of prior studies, describing relations between fatigue and cognitive dysfunction.

3. **Page 5. Discussion about heat sensitivity.**  
   **Response:** In this revised version of the manuscript we have added some text and references as suggested.

4. **Page 13. About fluctuations or progresses of cognitive dysfunction.**  
   **Response:** We have rewritten this part of the text and tried to further clarify and also added some references, as suggested.

**Minor Essential Revisions**

1. **Page 10.** “while the respondents were five years younger”, Add “on average”.  
   **Response:** We have followed your suggestion and added ‘on average’.

2. **Page 13.** There is some discussion regarding fatigue and the ability/inability to maintain work. It is posed that those with more education may be able to work longer because they are more likely to be engaged in ‘white collar’ jobs. It seems equally compelling that, depending on the age of onset, that educational attainment is disrupted by MS, thus curtailing their education. You may wish to add some commentary in this regard.  
   **Response:** We have tried to clarify this and added a sentence.

**Discretionary Revisions**

1. **On page 4, you refer to MS as a ‘rare’ disease. However, MS is the most common neurologic disease of women in young adulthood.**  
   **Response:** We agree to your opinion and realize that our formulation could be misinterpreted. We have rewritten the sentence in order to make this clearer in the text.

2. **Page 13. The sentence beginning ‘Interesting in this study ….’ is unnecessarily long and confusing. Consider rewriting as “Interesting, higher level of education predicted work capacity.”**  
   **Response:** Thank you for your advice. We have rewritten the sentence in order to make it clearer for the readers.