Author's response to reviews

Title: Are environmental characteristics in the municipal eldercare, more closely associated with frequent short sick leave spells among employees than with total sick leave? A cross-sectional study.

Authors:

Christina M Stapelfeldt (ChristinaMalmose.Stapelfeldt@stab.rm.dk)
Claus V Nielsen (Claus.Vinther@stab.rm.dk)
Niels T Andersen (TROLLE@BIOSTAT.AU.DK)
Line Krane (line.krane@uit.no)
Nils Fleten (nils.fleten@uit.no)
Vilhelm Borg (vbo@arbejdsmiljoforskning.dk)
Chris Jensen (Chris.Jensen@air.no)

Version: 4 Date: 5 June 2013

Author's response to reviews: see over
Cover letter

We want to thank the reviewers again for the constructive feedback. We hope our revisions address the concerns put forward by you.

To ease the identification of revisions made in the manuscript, we have underscored new sections and passages and copy-pasted the deletions into the cover letter. Elsewise it is explained in the responses below.

Point-by-point response to reviewer 1:

Comment on 6:
The reliability of the scales to measure demands for hiding emotions (#=0.60), and role conflict (#=0.68) do not exceed the widely used 0.7 threshold (Nunnaly, 1978). The consequence of this moderate, low reliability of the scales used is not mentioned in the Strengths and limitations section.

Response:
A section has been added to address the comment, please look at page 21, line 3-13.

Comment on 9:
Yes, some minor remarks remain: Schaufeli instead of Scaufeli, # instead of #

Response:
Please look for the underscored correct spelling of the name “Schaufeli” on page 17, line 2 and page 18, line 16.
Point-by-point response to reviewer 2:

Comment:
1) “affected of” instead of “affected by” (page 5),
Response:
Please look for the underscored revision on page 5, line 14.

Comments:
2) “avilable” instead of “available” (table 2) and peculiar wordings like
3) “the strength of the association was weakened” (page 15) and
4) “maximum length and duration” (table 1).
Response:
2) An a has been added to correct the spelling, please look in column 4-7, Table 2.
3) “the strength of the associations was weakened” has been replace by “associations were attenuated”, please look for the underscoring on page 15, line 21.
4) “length and” has been deleted from the sentence, please look in Table 1.

Comment:
5) In the revised tables, there is no explanation of the asterisk * in table 2.
Response:
The asterisk “§” has been deleted, please look in column 1 and 2, Table 2

Comment:
6) In tables 3-5, the limit of dichotomising the exposure variables into favourable and unfavourable levels are given in different ways that are not easy to read. For the demand variables, no limits are given, for the next 6 variables it is stated: “(<= reference mean scores)”, which is hard to combine with the first column, that is the reference mean scores.
Response:
A “#” has been added in Table 3 and is explained “# (> reference mean scores)”. In table 4-6 the “§” and “(<= reference mean score)” have been deleted, because the table legends state that it is the OR for unfavourable scores in each of the work factors. Please look for the revisions and deletions in Table 3-6.

Comment:
General health is included in tables 3-5, but not 1 and 2.
Response:
It is intentional; in Table 1 it would make no sense, because of non-response to general health. Table 2 contains variables that are used in adjustments, while general health is used as the dependent variable.
Comment:
The footnote in table 5: “Wald-test for overall difference in work factor score between [absence] patterns”.

Response:
“Sick leave” has been added to the sentence, please look for de revision in Table 5.