Reviewer's report

Title: Life style and longevity among initially healthy middle-aged men: prospective cohort study

Version: 2 Date: 12 November 2012

Reviewer: Jamie Seabrook

Reviewer's report:

Minor Essential Revisions

- need a comma in the Results section of the Abstract between "weight" and "55.4%"
- Under "Subjects," the second line states...."considered to be representative for the healthy working male...". Replace the word "for" with "of".
- Under "Subjects," it states that "Apparently healthy men, aged 40 to 60 years, were recruited..." Why "apparently"? That sounds unsure.
- Under "Subjects," paragraph 2, you need a comma after "Statistics Norway"
- At the end of the 2nd paragraph of the "Subjects" section, the authors give a mean of 55.3 years. What is the standard deviation? This measure of dispersion should always accompany a mean.
- Under "Results", capitalize all Table identification (e.g., Table 1, Table 2, not table 1, table 2).
- You need to describe Table 1 in the Results section. It sort of falls off a cliff in the text. Also, why no p values in Table 1?
- You need a coma after "non-smokers" and "normal weight" in paragraph 3 of the Results section. Also replace "men with overweight" with "men who were overweight" in that same paragraph. Lastly, your BMI categorization is incorrect in that paragraph. It states a BMI between 25 and 30 but Tables 3 and 4 use a categorization between 25 and 29.9 and > = 30.
- Capitalize "Figure" (not "figure") in the Results section.
- Discussion section, paragraph 2, should say "non-smokers" not "non-smoker".
- Paragraph 3, should say "grip-strength" not "grip-strenght". Also, it should state, ...."as the number of participants" not "as number of participants".
- Paragraph 6 of the Discussion should say, "and changed their smoking habits" not "changed their smoking habits..."

Major Essential Revisions

- Why is age being dichotomized into <55.6 years and > = 55.6 years? That doesn't make any sense.
- All of the tables use "smokers" and "non-smokers" as the column variables. Is
that ultimately what the authors are interested in showing? That smokers have a higher risk of mortality controlling for some other lifestyle factors in initially healthy middle-aged men? If yes, that is not what I got from reading the Introduction and study’s objectives (the latter which aren’t clearly defined).

- In Figure 1, where is the legend for smokers vs. non-smokers? Without a legend for this variable, the bar chart is incomplete and confusing.
- The very last line of the Discussion section states, "Increased probability of longevity may be easier to understand for ordinary people than reduced mortality rates.” I think you mean the general public?

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**Quality of written English:** Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.