Reviewer's report

Title: Which dimensions of psychosocial working conditions are monitored in Europe?

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Reviewer: Johannes Siegrist

Reviewer's report:

This is an important, well-conducted collaborative work that aims at clarifying the congruence of dimensions and items measuring psychosocial working conditions with relevance to health in 6 national surveys in Europe as well as in the European Working Conditions Survey. The research questions are clearly stated, the database is robust, and the way authors performed their analysis, report and discuss their findings is appropriate. The quality of writing is very good, and the list of references covers essential literature.

Three results of this analysis are of particular interest to the research community:
1. There is substantial congruence between the surveys with regard to core dimensions of two internationally established theoretical models of stressful work, demand-control and effort-reward imbalance. 2. Yet, there is huge variability in the wording of items, the comprehensiveness of covering respective dimensions, and the answering format. Progress in this area will be contingent on efforts towards harmonizing the measurements. 3. A number of additional dimensions of stressful work with potential significance for health are identified.

Despite these merits the following minor essential revisions of the Discussion section need to be considered:

1. Authors should at least discuss why they did not conduct the next level of analysis, i.e. the application of exploratory or confirmatory factor analysis to identify to what extent the 'dimensions' of classified items are replicated as factors. It should be noted that the theoretical models mentioned identified distinct 'latent constructs' by means of testing the factorial structure of items representing the scales measuring the construct.

2. While the identification of additional dimensions is considered an important achievement authors should clarify that national surveys are not an appropriate design to demonstrate their importance for health. Rather, prospective cohort studies are needed to assess their explanatory contribution.

3. In the paragraph on limitations authors should comment on a potential bias of their findings due to the fact that the majority of surveys comes from Northern/Western European countries. It is possible that surveys from eastern and southern Europe (if existent) identify additional critical aspects of psychosocial working conditions, e.g. in the context of precarious work, seasonal work, temporary unemployment etc.
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.