Reviewer's report

Title: The influence of work, lifestyle, and gender on sickness absence in Brazilian workers

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Reviewer: Anna Siukola

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Minor Essential Revisions

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
   Yes, the study question is defined well and is relevant.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
   I think that the methods used are appropriate, but there is need for some focusing. I’m wondering, is it really so, that "All data collected were anonymous." (in the paragraph Study Design and Participants)? How was it possible to emerge sick leave data and the survey, if researchers didn’t know personalities? I would like to see more details about this emerging, or more details how and in what phase the data were changed for anonymous.

   Another method question is in the paragraph Independent Variables. I would like to hear arguments why physical activity variable includes also work and leisure time activity? The description of the variable pointed out the leisure time activity, but how the activity in the work has been assessed? Is there any reference for this physical activity -variable? I think, that it could be good to keep these activities (during work and leisure time) separately (at least in the beginning and maybe emerge them later, if needed), because it is known that their influences differs. If this is not possible based on the used data, I would like to see more reasoning and explanations for using this kind of variable.

3. Are the data sound?
   Data is primarily reliable with some limitations, which are considered in the discussion. Only in the Results, in the fifth paragraph, there came suddenly a new fact about the data: "Before analysing the association between independent variables and sickness absence, 51 underweight (BMI<18.5Kg/m2) workers were excluded." This thing should be described already in the paragraph about Participants. Also this exclusion needs some explanations written to the text. I’m wondering was it not possible to do a restriction to the data already in the beginning so that in the table 1 there would be also N=2150 instead of 2201? If not, I suggest to do as I wrote into the earlier sentences.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
Yes, these things are on form.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?

There is little repetition in the Discussion compared to the Results. Statistical figures, which have already presented in the Results should remove from the Discussion ("…sociodemographic variables OR=1.51...") and ("…10 or more days sick leave OR=1.45..."). Also in the fifth paragraph in the Discussion there is statistical figures, which have been presented in the table 2. There is no need to write them strictly to the text of the Discussion ("…for 10 or more days of sick leave (OR=1.38.....").

I suggest that there would be a few sentences about how the BRICS countries may differ from well-developed (and largely studied) in the light of the results. This could be done with or without references. The main thing is to deal with this issue in some way.

Already in the Methods I commented the physical activity variable. If it is not possible to do any changes to the variable, the minimum is that this aspect will be discussed in the Discussion. I mean that it may have an effect to the results that work and leisure time activity were handled together. Also I encourage to write more details to the Methods section about this.

Conclusion is good and clear. I have only two comments on it. First, I would like to see some example or the term "work type factors" or "type of work" instead of work factors, because it is so common concept. The second thing is that I do not prefer to using term "productivity loss" in the conclusions, because it is not really used term in the study. Sickness absence instead of it could be better based on the facts of the manuscript.

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?

Limitations are clearly stated, but I do not agree with the fourth limitation. It would be a limitation, if the aim of the study had been to clarify productivity aspects. Even if these sick leave and presenteeism aspects are commonly linked to the productivity, but with my understanding it was not the case in this study or at least it should have been told in the background, aims, results etc.

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?

Yes, I have nothing comments on this. The reference list is relevant and comprehensive.

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?

Yes, mainly. I prefer that in the title the word "work" would be the third, not first thing, which is investigated. In other word, title could be "The influence of lifestyle, gender and work on sickness absence in Brazilian workers". Also I think about the choice if there is no need for a word "work" at all in the title … Abstract
is good. Only thing what I would suggest is that in the first paragraph in Background, in the last sentence will be told that the study is done among Brazilian workers.

9. Is the writing acceptable?
Yes, I think that the writing is good enough to understand and accept.

Other comments:
1. In the Results I suggest that there would be three sub-titles instead one (Sick leave), for example: Socioeconomic characteristics, Lifestyle factors and Sick Leave.

2. Also in the Results, in the third paragraph should be told to whom the results are compared. For example, there is now ”Ex-smokers were also more often obese (OR=2.12;CI=1.47-3.05).” So, more often obese than non-smokers or smokers? Because there is not any table to telling this, the text should have more details in it. This same focusing should be done for the first sentence of this third paragraph of the Results.

3. I’m not sure is it right to say “this association was stronger 10 or more days of sick leave” in the Results, in the second paragraph, second sentence of the Sick leave section. Is the stronger same than statistically significant in this case?

4. The locations of the tables were not told in the text.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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