Reviewer's report

Title: Working and hypertension: Gaps in employment not associated with increased risk in 13 European countries, a retrospective cohort study.

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Reviewer: Ricardo Pagan

Reviewer's report:

The article analyses an important question from a health, social and economic perspective. The authors explore the contribution of breaks in employment to the development of hypertension. Most of the previous studies on this issue have been cross-sectional, as the authors mentioned. Overall, the paper is well written and has the conventional structure. However, I have found some important limitations and drawbacks in the paper that make its contribution very limited. In addition, some of them have been pointed out by the own authors in the last section of the paper.

1) The main contributions of the paper must be improved by the authors and included in the introduction. The results obtained in the paper are similar to others found in the literature and have little impact on the study of the relationship between hypertension and breaks in employment. In addition, I have missed more discussion on the possible existence of reverse causality in the paper and its effects on the results shown by the authors.

2) The authors use an interesting database (SHARE), which contains information on many socioeconomic variables. However, the authors do not use some explanatory variables in the multivariable analysis that may have impact on the likelihood of having hypertension. For example, job responsibility, industry, firm size, type of contract of the past job positions before being unemployed, household composition, etc.

3) Furthermore, a selection problem in the sample can exist due to the fact that some individuals are more likely to have hypertension than others. This lack of control leads to consider the results shown in Table 2 as very preliminary. The authors must take into account this important selection problem.

4) The conclusions are very poor and must include some public policy recommendations.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
No