Reviewer's report

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

Version: 1 Date: 14 April 2014

Reviewer: Kirsten M Fiest

Reviewer's report:

In this study, the effect of gaps in employment on the development of hypertension is assessed in a sample of 9985 European's over 50 years of age.

The introduction is well organized and sufficiently covers the literature. The paper is well written and organized. I have concerns with the statistical methodology of this paper, which limit this paper considerably.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1) My greatest concern is with the statistical model selected by the authors for data analysis. They state that the data is panel in nature, yet they do not use a method that takes this into account. The analysis does not take time into account, though they mention their model takes into account "time varying covariates". Please consider using a model that adequately takes into account the longitudinal nature of the dataset.

2) Please explain how you assessed for confounding (an adjusted model is mentioned).

3) Before confounding is assessed, effect measure modification should be assessed, as it is certainly plausible that the measures of effect could differ based on levels of age, sex, etc…

Minor Essential Revisions

4) The directions for future research are week, please explore this point further.

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' below