Author’s response to reviews

Title: Dealing with sickness certification - a survey of problems and strategies among general practitioners and orthopaedic surgeons.

Authors:

Britt Arrelov (britt.arrelov@sll.se)
Kristina Alexandersson (kristina.alexandersson@cns.ki.se)
Jan Hagberg (jan.hagberg@cns.ki.se)
Anna Lofgren (anna.lofgren@cns.ki.se)
Gunnar Nilsson (gunnar.nilsson@sll.se)
Sari Ponzer (sari.ponzer@sodersjukhuset.se)

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Author’s response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor,

Attached is a new version of the manuscript “Dealing with sickness certification – a survey of problems and strategies among general practitioners and orthopaedic surgeons”, revised according to your instructions. All authors have read your letter together with the reviewers’ comments and been part of the revision.

Point by point response to the reviewers’ comments:

1. Christos Lionis
   
   We have given some more background information about the questionnaire and we also included a reference to an article based on the whole data set. Validity etcetera is commented on.
   
   We have organised the method section with subheadings. We have followed the authors’ instruction doing this.
   
   We have mentioned the findings implication for the planning of the two groups’ vocational training.
   
   We have also expanded the discussion under the light of findings from other studies.

2. Olaf Gjøril Aasland
   
   We agree that we were not surprised by the findings. As researcher we however hold the opinion that it is important also to verify “expected” findings with scientific studies. However, based on this study we can not state that we scientifically know the reasons for the findings. Not all findings where the ones that could be “expected” and we have not found in earlier studies that different patient categories thoroughly explain all differences between physician groups.
   
   We have not studied, and in the questionnaire have no questions on the political dimension of sickness certification. Therefore, we don’t comment this issue in the article.
   
   We have not discussed the employers’ role in sickness certification, in this study – that was not the purpose of the study and we do not have that type of data. We are however aware of their importance for the sick-listing process and vocational rehabilitation. The focus of this study was the sick-listing practice of two types of physicians.
   
   We have no data on differences in sickness certification practices. We agree with the reviewer about the importance of the question: do the physicians who
experience the certification process differently also sick list differently. Unfortunately, we have no such information in this study.

We have included the article suggested by the reviewer in the reference list. We find this reference relevant for the study and are thankful for having this pointed out to us.

On behalf of the authors
Britt Arrelöv

Correspondence to:

Britt Arrelöv
CVU, Forum
Box. 175 33
118 91 Stockholm
Sweden