Author's response to reviews

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

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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. Thank you very much for worthwhile comments and a new chance to review the article. All authors have read your letter together with the reviewers’ comments and have taken part in the revision process. Below we give point by point response to the reviewers’ comments:

Christos Lionis
The development of the questionnaire, in several steps, involving several external researchers and physicians, a rigorous pilot study, the high response rate, as well as the content of the more than 1000 written comments made by physicians in the questionnaire well strengthens our claiming face validity. Other tests of validity and reliability of the instrument remains to be performed. This is now discussed in some more depth in the methodological considerations in the discussion section.

Olaf Gjerl Aasland
Aasland states that it would be interesting to include some general health-political reflections in the discussion part. We have great interest in such discussions; however, do not wish to expand the text in a scientific article with a discussion about something we actually have not studied, that is have no data on. We have, nevertheless, included a comment about the fact that scientific evidence on the best or optimal sick-listing of patients is missing and that this makes sickness certification to a difficult task for many physicians. We also state the need for more studies in order to settle best practice and how to organise health care services appropriately regarding sick-listing, especially regarding patients with ambiguous diagnoses.

We have completed the text regarding the need for further research in order to be able to explain the differences in sick-listing issues between physician groups with some more factors that are important.

On behalf of the authors
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