Author's response to reviews

Title: The role of paternal psychosocial work condition on mental health of their children: A case-control study

Authors:

Stefania Maggi (stefania.maggi@gmail.com)
Aleck Ostry (ostry@interchange.ubc.ca)
James Tansey (james.tansey@sbs.ox.ac.uk)
James Dunn (jim.dunn@utoronto.ca)
Ruth Hershler (hershler@interchange.ubc.ca)
Lisa Chen (lisachen@interchange.ubc.ca)
Clyde Hertzman (hertzman@interchange.ubc.ca)

Version: 3 Date: 28 December 2007

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

We are re-submitting the manuscript #6691101541290657.

In what follows is a detailed account of our responses to the reviewers’ comments. Please note that our responses have been added in the text in **bold letters**. We look forward to receiving news of your editorial decision on this revised and improved manuscript.

Sincerely,

Stefania Maggi.

**Reviewer:** Johannes Siegrist

**Reviewer's report:**
The revised version of the manuscript, in combination with the authors' response to reviewers, resulted in substantial clarifications and improvements. Most major and minor concerns of my former review have been met.

However, I recommend to revise the part of Discussion where it is stated that 'Specific aspects of paternal work stress play different roles in the onset of mental health outcomes from childhood to adulthood' (p. 15). As no theoretically grounded hypothesis has been developed a priori it is not clear how to interpret findings and to what extent results are robust.

We agree, and because this sentence is not essential to our arguments, we have deleted it.

Causal interpretations (neurochemistry, biological embedding etc.) should only be stated with great care.

Again, the paragraph was not essential and has been deleted from the discussion.

Although the extended table of results is welcome I do not think it is appropriate to confront readers with such extensive data. Hopefully, a way of condensing relevant findings for a clear-cut scientific paper can be elaborated.

This level of detail was requested by the other reviewer and it is our belief that the editor will decide whether to include it in the published manuscript or not.

Finally, just a short feedback to authors concerning my suggestion to refer to Melvin Kohn's work. This was not meant to provide direct empirical evidence of an association
between work characteristics with children’s mental health. Rather, I suggested Kohn's work to provide an explanatory framework for this association.

Thanks for this clarification.

Reviewer: Jim van Os
Reviewer's report:
General
Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
The authors have responded to most of the compulsory revisions. However, I recommend to limit the focus of the manuscript to the effect of paternal psychosocial working conditions and sub-dimensions of these conditions on the development of psychopathology, before and after controlling for confounding variables such as paternal mental health. In this way, hypothesis, background, methods and results will be much more clear.

We agree with the reviewer that there was still some confusion as to what our independent variables (those linked to our hypothesis) and our control variables were throughout the paper, especially in the methods and analysis section. To clarify this point we have made the following changes:

Pg. 8: In the method section we have further clarified that the focus of the study is on the effect of paternal psychosocial working conditions on the development of psychopathology by adding a subsection to specifically describe the nature of potential confounding variables.

Pg 9: The distinction between psychosocial work conditions and potential confounders is restated.

Pg. 11: in the analysis section independent variables and control variables are described separately.