Reviewer's report

**Title:** Health problems and help-seeking in a nationwide sample of operational Norwegian ambulance personnel

**Version:** 2  **Date:** 11 December 2007

**Reviewer:** holger ursin

**Reviewer's report:**

The important finding is the health state of this sample, and the lack of support for notions that these gentle men and women work themselves to death. The comparisons with other nationalities and previous publications may be somewhat halting since Norwegians do not really work that hard, compared with other nations and cultures.

The use of the short version of the Subjective Health Complaints inventory makes it difficult to evaluate whether these ambulance personnel have more or less of musculoskeletal complaints, since the HUNT does not have any such data. The authors take this into consideration in their conclusions. They also are careful in their use of "case"- taken from the Norwegian Physician data ("Legekår").

Their cut off was rather arbitrary.

Musculoskeletal pain in personnel that has to lift always leads to more problems in their work situation, sometimes and probably wrongly given attribution power. The comorbidity findings are important. Comorbidity for these complaints is widespread (no pun intended), it is important for prognosis, and the search for "specificity" may be a blind alley.

**What next?:** Accept without revision

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**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