Author’s response to reviews

Title: Working conditions and Work-Family Conflict in German hospital doctors: psychosocial and organisational predictors and consequences

Authors:

Isabelle Fuss (isafuss@googlemail.com)
Matthias Nuebling (nuebling@empirische-beratung.de)
David Schwappach (david.schwappach@isgf.unizh.ch)
Hans-Martin Hasselhorn (hasselho@uni-wuppertal.de)
Monika A. Rieger (monika.rieger@uni-wh.de)

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Author’s response to reviews: see over
Isabelle Fuß, M.D.
Department of Occupational and Environmental Medicine
Institute of General Practice and Family Medicine
Faculty of Medicine, University Witten/Herdecke
Alfred-Herrhausen-Str. 50
D-58448 Witten, Germany

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To
Melissa Norton, M.D.
Editor-in-Chief
BMC Public Health

Dear Mrs. Norton,

attached we submit the revised version of our manuscript:

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Working conditions and Work-Family Conflict in German hospital doctors: psychosocial and organisational predictors and consequences.
Isabelle Fuss, Matthias Nuebling, David Schwappach, Hans-Martin Hasselhorn and Monika A. Rieger

First, in the name of all authors, I would like to thank the reviewers for the thorough reading of our article. Their constructive criticism and specific requests for revisions were very helpful. For myself, the insightful comments of the reviewers were in fact crucial in guiding me towards a much improved manuscript.

Secondly, I very much appreciate that the editorial office conceded an extended period for revision of the manuscript. This was necessary due to me staying abroad from February to mid April, and the fact that substantial revisions, and even rewriting of large parts of the manuscript had to be done.

In addition to our point-to-point response to the reviewers’ concerns which follows below, I want to remark that the language issues of the previously submitted manuscript have also been addressed: several native speakers contributed with corrections to the revised version.

Yours sincerely,

Isabelle Fuß, M.D.
Response to review of Robert R Sinclair

Major Compulsory Revisions:

1. Concerning the missing rationale, hypotheses and a clear statement of what gap our study fills in the literature, we gave a comprehensive review on literature concerning aspects of Work-Family Conflict (WFC) in the introduction. Hereby the particular situation of physicians in general concerning WFC has been described. As described by the reviewer, this is an explorative study i.e., not dealing with hypotheses but with key questions. These are derived from the findings in literature. In the results section, the findings are shown in the same order as given in the introduction.

We applied a validated quantitative measurement instrument, the German version of the Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire (COPSOQ) to examine psychosocial stressors at work. We followed the standard recommendations for the instrument. This is shown in the text.

2. In fact, our wording “work-family-privacy conflict” was a mis-translation. In the introduction as well as in the method section, we now give a definition of what is meant by Work-Family Conflict (WFC) and that we focus in our study on one direction of this phenomenon, namely work interfering with family conflict (WIF). The key questions are given with regard to WIF.

3. The reviewer suggested to omit the statistical analysis section as a whole. All authors discussed this comment, but decided to stay with this section. Statistical methods used in our study were briefly listed. We further described how comparisons to other sample as well as subgroup analyses were performed. In addition and according to the reviewer’s concern a short description of the statistics is given in the result section, too.

4. The rationale for transformation of the 5-point response scales to 100 point scales is now given in the text together with details on transformation and possible changes of the property of the scales.

5. All analyses performed are shown in the methods and result section.
Minor Essential Revisions:

1. We displayed all English original items of the WFC (WIF) scale by Netemeyer et al. in the methods section.
2. All scales applied in our survey, their response scales, reliability information and sample items are displayed in the additional table 4 as suggested by the reviewer.
3. The multiple regression table (table 2) was extended with the cumulative multiple r squared.

Discretionary Revisions:

1. The hospital-specific items on work organisation including the response scales are shown in detail in the additional table 5.
2. Figures 1-3 were deleted from the article. Instead of figure 2, we generated a full correlation matrix including internal consistency estimates (Cronbach’s alpha) of our sample as additional table 9.
3. We deleted the zero to the left of the decimal points as long as it cannot take any other value. This follows the reviewer’s suggestion. Also, only the p-values $p < .01$ and $p < .05$ were reported in our article.
4. Commas after ”i.e.” and ”e.g.” were added.
5. With the help of native speaking colleagues we cleaned up the language issues. Also, a general editing was performed. Yet, this manuscript might still need some further editing which will be available as soon as we know the reviewers’ rating.

Response to review of Jess K Alberts

Reviewer’s report:

1. We gave a broader explanation of how our study contributes to the research on the current physician attrition in Germany)(see above).
2. We rewrote the methods section and provided additional and detailed information as requested by the reviewer (see below).
3. The results section was further elaborated and findings were displayed in detail (see below).
4. With the help of the reviewer’s comments we elaborated all sections of the article.
5. In the discussion section our results are compared to findings from other research projects.
6. The section ”potential limitations” was revised.
7. In order to fulfill the requirement of the reviewers, we provided a stronger review of literature connected to the topic of Work-Family Conflict. This has both be done in the introduction as well as in the discussion.

8. The article was partly rewritten, and the revised version has been edited by native speaking colleagues. Nevertheless, there might still be language issues, which will be solved in a next step if the manuscript is judged worth for publication.

**General Comments:**

Literature Review: We discussed findings of previous literature in more detail and tried to describe how our study fills a gap in this prior literature.

Method: We gave more detailed explanation how the pre-tests and interviews were conducted. An operational definition of work interfering with family conflict (WIF), the one direction that we focused on in our study, is given in the description of the instruments. The instrument used in our study to capture psychosocial stressors at work (COPSOQ) was described in more detail. Reliability information to all scales used in our study are displayed in table 4 (additional file) as well as a full correlation matrix.

Results: We described and explained our findings in more detail. The bivariate analysis of the hospital-specific items revealed several significant correlations to WIF; this statement was clarified and results were displayed in table 6 (additional file). The item “expected sexual contact from colleagues or superiors” was part of the overall study on “Psychosocial hazards and strains at work for German hospital physicians” - as it is irrelevant for the present paper we omitted any description of the item and/or results.

Discussion: As suggested by the reviewer, we described the relevance of our research findings for the larger public. We provided more details on how our sample was similar to the population of German physicians in 2005 (description of the sample in the results section) and whether it can be compared to the German general population (results section and discussion).