Reviewer's report

**Title:** Individual and contextual covariates of burnout: a cross-sectional nationwide study of French teachers

**Version:** 5  **Date:** 20 May 2009

**Reviewer:** Kirsi Ahola

**Reviewer's report:**

The authors have done a fine job in revising their manuscript. I have only a few minor comments left and a few linguistic suggestions. After these have been taken into account, in my opinion, this paper can be accepted.

**Minor essential revisions**

1. In the conclusions of the abstract well as of the whole paper, I would state that "Programs to enhance teaching environment might be an interesting approach to try to prevent burnout. It would be useful to take the different dimensions into account in planning the intervention." Because the interventions were not studied here, we cannot know if they are of use on the basis of this study. In the conclusions, I would rather say that "Our study underscores the role of socio-professional environment in teacher burnout and support the possibility of social and organizational solutions in preventing and alleviating this syndrome".

2. Last paragraph of the introduction is unclear. I suggest to rephrase it as follows: "... we analysed a representative sample of policyholders of the "..." (MGEN) from a large survey on physical and mental health conducted in France in 2005. This health care insurance company (MGEN) covers ..."

3. Page 14, 1. paragraph: It would be more accurate to state that: "Reliance on self-report data for the measurement of both burnout and its associates does not allow for causal conclusions". I would remove the sentence on social desirability. I don't think that it would be a source of bias. The important thing the possible effect of negative affectivity which can distort all self-reports and cause reversed causality.

**Discretionary revisions**

1. Page 4, 1. paragraph, line 3: ...feelings of being emotionally overextended...
3. The authors use a word "vocation" for the meaning of calling or mission. In occupational health literature, this word, vocation, if often used as a synonym of a job. I propose to change the word vocation to calling throughout the text and the tables with find-replace -command.
4. Page 13, 1. paragraph, line 3: I would re-phrase the last sentence as "since it is possible to control or change job-related conditions".
5. Page 13, 3. paragraph, line 12: I would change "too much gap" to "a wide gap".

6. Page 14, 3. paragraph, line 7: ...reversed causality...

7. In conclusions, I would say that (line 5) "keeping in mind the different components of burnout..."

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**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.