Reviewer's report

Title: A theoretical framework to describe communication processes during medical disability assessment interviews

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Reviewer: Peter Donceel

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This article deals with an important and very relevant subject in the field of social insurance medicine. The conceptualisation of the communication between the disability assessing physician and the claimant is innovating. Furthermore this work opens the path for empirical studies and might develop into useful applications to improve the communication in disability assessment interviews. For me, these reasons are more than sufficient to give a positive advice on its publication.

On the other hand, there is also room for improvement of the manuscript and I have 3 major remarks for the authors:

1. The article is too long and especially the long introduction section can be shortened to increase the readability

2. Insurance medicine is a very broad field and the article deals with only one specific aspect: the disability assessment interview in a social security context. The title is correct in this respect, but throughout the article it is suggested that the model is applicable to all communication settings in insurance medicine. I doubt that this is the case for e.g. private insurance contacts, health care insurance, medical expertise for courts, counselling with regard to insurance problems … . In many cases the term ‘insurance medicine’ is better replaced by ‘social insurance medicine’ or ‘social security medicine’. Instead of using ‘insurance physician’ it is more appropriate to refer to the ‘social insurance physician’.

3. The text is written with the very specific situation of the Dutch social insurance legislation in mind. Sometimes the Dutch situation is presented as the general situation of any social insurance physician, but evidently this is not case due to heterogeneity of social security legislation and organisation. Some examples of such statements, which should be avoided or specified:

a. Page 10: ‘the primary task of the insurance physician is to assess the claimants capacity for work….’: in many countries professional reintegration os an equally important task.

b. Page 11: ‘insurance physicians normally meet claimants once’ is not true for many social security settings where repetitive interviews take place especially in the first months of work incapacity.

c. Page 23: registration of insurance physicians is a typical feature of the Dutch
social insurance physicians but not of all social insurance physicians.

One minor remark: I do not understand why insurance medicine is described as a ‘specific area of occupational medicine’ (page 4). Occupational medicine and insurance medicine are two separate domains of social medicine.

**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