Reviewer's report

**Title:** Physiological responses to low-force work and psychosocial stress in women with chronic trapezius myalgia.

**Version:** 2  **Date:** 20 May 2009

**Reviewer:** Kristian Bernhard Nilsen

**Reviewer's report:**

The overall impression is now much better in the revised manuscript. Nevertheless I believe the contribution of the present study to the understanding of chronic local musculoskeletal pain/trapezius myalgia is minimal.

I have one comment:

The association between muscle activity and pain are not convincing. The author’s state in the introduction that: “The potential link between muscle over-activity and development of pain in the shoulder/neck region is yet to be confirmed”. Later, in the discussion, they state that “the direction of the causal relationship between pain and EMG activity is not obvious and in fact cannot be determined using the present study design”. However, the authors have searched for, and presented, correlations coefficients between pain and muscle activity. In the first version of the manuscript, these correlations were performed for both groups merged, and in the present version the correlations are presented only for the muscle pain group (and not the control group). If the association between muscle activity and pain is evident selectively for the pain group (and with the strongest correlation in the time period when the muscle activity is larger for the patient group, or immediately after this period) it may be a convincing association. If not, one may argue that the present study does not find any relation between muscle activity and pain in this patient group. Correlation coefficients between pain and muscle activity should be reported and discussed also for the control group.

(Minor essential revision)

**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