Author’s response to reviews

Title: Staying at work with back pain: patients' experiences of work-related help received from GPs and other clinicians. A qualitative study.

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Author’s response to reviews: see over
RESPONSE TO REVIEWERS (REVISED MANUSCRIPT)

Thank you for your invitation to submit a revised manuscript. We are grateful for the reviewers’ helpful comments and address their concerns point-by-point below. All changes have been highlighted in the manuscript.

Reviewer 1: Sarah Dean

1) Page 5 paragraph commencing ‘This office worker...’ refers to a male participant yet the preceding quote is from a female. Whilst it becomes clear that the male participant’s quote is given at the end of the paragraph it might be better to adjust the start of the sentence to avoid any confusion for the first time reader.
   The word ‘This’ has been replaced by ‘An’.

2) Page 12 line 15 the new text refers to ‘manual therapy’; should this be either ‘for manual therapy’ or ‘to manual therapists’?
   The word ‘for’ has been inserted before ‘manual therapy’.

3) P13 second sentence, the new text uses the term ‘ignorance’ and I question if this is the right term or whether the term needs further qualification, e.g. who’s ignorance and about what? I think you mean that advice to stay at work is misconstrued by patients as they think this means clinicians do not fully appreciate / understand what it means to remain in their workplace with back pain.
   The sentence now reads ‘....may be misconstrued by patients as a lack of understanding of what it means to remain at their workplace with back pain’.

4) Page 15, line 20. This whole article now captures some of the complexity of working and managing back pain; I would therefore recommend that the authors insert the word ‘complexity’ of issues mentioned in the last sentence of the discussion: ‘.....our study does highlight the complexity of issues and .....’.
   The word ‘complexity’ has been inserted as recommended.

Reviewer 2: Padraig MacNeela

It could represent an improvement to characterize the findings as a whole; the lead in to the description of the five separate themes is minimal, whereas you should consider what the themes amount to in terms of the patients’ experience.

The following paragraph has been inserted in the results section on page 3:

The main finding from this study was that the participants reported receiving little appropriate work-related help from health professionals. Five themes were identified through analysis of the scripts which best characterised their experiences. Each theme is illustrated in the text with quotations from the participants.

Page 3 ‘In some cases this was as a result of by seeing a different GP at the practice than usual’ – typo needs to be corrected, some boldface used in reference list. Some overall a review of the revised text to ensure compliance with presentation standards.

The word ‘by’ has been deleted. The text and reference list has been revised to comply with presentation standards.

In addition:

- The word ‘Another’ replaces ‘This’ at the introduction to the second quotation in the Fourth theme to add clarity.
- Two citations have been corrected in the discussion.
- The last sentence has of the abstract has been changed from:
  ‘Future research is recommended to explore how GPs and clinicians can address the work problems of their patients and how they can best communicate to employers’ to:
  ‘Future research is recommended to explore how the workplace problems of patients can be best addressed by health professionals’.