Reviewer's report

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

Version: 3 Date: 19 July 2010

Reviewer: Padraig MacNeela

Reviewer's report:

Thanks for the opportunity to review the revisions to the manuscript. The study gives a useful insight into patients' experiences of dealing with work issues.

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?  
Yes

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?  
The methods are appropriate. The level of description of the meaning thematic analysis had in this study could be improved, considering the varied ways in which this method of analysis has been described in the research literature. I would normally associate information on participants (breakdown by gender etc.) with the methods section whereas this information features in the results.

3. Are the data sound?  
The interpretations and commentary made on the interview extracts appear to be justified.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?  
The findings are adequately grounded in the data.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?  
Yes, it is important to integrate the findings with previous work with GPs and other professions, this has been done.

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?  
Yes.

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?  
Yes, the findings are integrated with previous work.

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?  
Yes
9. Is the writing acceptable?
Yes.

Summary
The paper has been revised and works well. A wide range of participants contributed to the study, and this is helpful in identifying the general picture about supporting continuance in work / return to work.

Discretionary Revisions (which are recommendations for improvement but which the author can choose to ignore)
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

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
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.

**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