Reviewer's report

Title: Prevalence of multi-site musculoskeletal symptoms: a French cross-sectional working population-based study

Version: 3 Date: 12 January 2012

Reviewer: David Coggon

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Minor Essential Revisions

1. Abstract, first sentence. As I pointed out previously, no evidence is provided in the main body of the paper to support the statement that the prevalence of musculoskeletal disorders in the working population is “constantly increasing”. This is a contentious statement, and seems unlikely to apply to all working populations across the world. It should either be supported by appropriate references in the main text, or re-worded.

2. Page 7, lines 9-10. This is still unclear as written. A possible alternative would be “For bilateral anatomical sites, MS were classed as present if they were reported on either or both sides of the body.”

3. Page 8, line 2. This refers to a 2.0% sample of the workers examined by occupational physicians. However, the Methods section refers to selection of “one out of ten workers on the selected half-days”. It is unclear how these figures are reconciled.

4. Page 10, paragraph 3, line 1. Does presence of MS in an anatomical region for at least 30 days, mean presence in at least one site within the region for at least 30 days, or could it be that a case had pain at one site for 16 days and another site in the same region for 16 days? This should, perhaps, be made clear.

5. Page 11, paragraph 2, lines 8-12. Something seems to have gone wrong in the editing here.

6. Page 11, last paragraph. I would be interested to know the bias that is inherent in collection of data by self-administered questionnaires. Does it lead to over-estimation or under-estimation of the true prevalence of symptoms, and what is the evidence for this?

7. Page 12, paragraph 1. We are told that the validity of the French version of the questionnaire has been studied, but we are not told what was found. I raised this point last time, but it does not appear to have been addressed.

8. Page 13, paragraph 2, last line. Head symptoms can, of course, arise from musculoskeletal disease in the neck for temporo-mandibular joint.

9. Page 14, three lines from the end. Again, something seems to have gone
wrong with the editing. It is unclear what is meant by “..associated with others MS that is multisites MS.”

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

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**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.