Reviewer's report

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

Version: 3 Date: 23 January 2012

Reviewer: Susan Picavet

Reviewer's report:

# BMC Prevalence of multi-site (revised version)

Major issue

The paper did improve, but I still miss the focus on the central issue of the paper, i.e. multi-site musculoskeletal symptoms. In order “to avoid to lengthening of the paper” the authors decided not to present an analysis on “whether or not the coprevalence of multi site symptoms was higher than can be expected, given independence” and not to present a “comparison with the literature and take into account the differences between countries and the differences between working and non-working and/or general population”. In particular the discussion section is not in balance. In my opinion the discussion would improve considerably (both content and its readability) if the description of the single site prevalence’s and the extensive description of the differences between men and women, will be replaced by a solid discussion of the found prevalence of multi-site symptoms with the figures from the literature. How do the French workers compare to other high income countries? Are figures similar or not? Are measurements comparable or not? What is the role of working vs. non-working population in the size of multi-site prevalence, higher or not? What is the role of age and sex in the prevalence of multi-site symptoms?

Minor issues

- in the first sentence of the abstract it is said that “the prevalence(..) is constantly increasing” Where is this shown?
- Introduction: page 4: an estimated prevalence of 15 to 30% cannot be regarded as “low”.
- Discussion: page 16: “More precise identification of the most frequent MS profiles(..) are therefore essential (..)”, indeed: and that was the focus of this paper, wasn’t it?

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