Author's response to reviews

Title: Musculoskeletal disorders among construction workers: a one-year follow-up study

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Author's response to reviews: see over
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Dr William S Shaw
Editor
BMC Musculoskeletal Disorders

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Enclosures Electronic manuscript

Dear Miss Quiniquini, Dear Dr Shaw,

Herewith we resubmit the revised manuscript “Musculoskeletal disorders among construction workers: a one-year follow-up study”. This paper has been revised in line with the reviewers’ suggestions.

On the next pages are the reviewer’s remarks and suggestions stated in italics followed by our statements on how the manuscript has been changed accordingly. Changes in the manuscript are highlighted in the document “MSD construction workers_highlighted.doc”. The clean manuscript is entitled “MSD construction workers_clean.doc”. We hope this paper is now suitable for publication in BMC Musculoskeletal Disorders.

Looking forward to your reply,

Yours sincerely,

Julitta Boschman, Msc
Henk van der Molen, PhD
Judith Sluiter, PhD
Prof. Monique Frings-Dresen, PhD
Responses to the comments from the reviewers on the paper:
MS: 7049594237027697
Musculoskeletal disorders among construction workers: a one-year follow-up study.

Below are the reviewer’s remarks and suggestions stated in italics followed by our statements on how the manuscript has been changed accordingly (see ►). In the document entitled “MSD construction workers_highlighted.doc” the changed sentences and paragraphs are highlighted in yellow. The clean document is entitled “MSD construction workers_clean”.

Reviewer #1. Alberto J Caban-Martinez

Reviewer: Andrew Gray

I again enjoyed reading the manuscript and appreciate the effort the authors have invested in responding to comments from the reviewers.
► Thank you for your positive feedback.

There are a few very minor points that I would like to make, some of which should be corrected and one of which I consider to be optional.

Minor essential revisions:
On page 8, a p-value of "p=0.00" is given. I would generally suggest giving p-values to 3 decimal places, but in any case, p-values cannot of course be equal to zero and so this should be "p<0.01".
► We corrected "p=0.00" into "p<0.01" on page 8.

The IQRs given in Table 1 are 25th and 75th percentiles. The IQR is often thought to refer to this pair of values but is in fact their difference, providing a single number summary of dispersion analogous to the standard deviation. The table headings and footnote (and references in the text) should be changed to refer to the 25th and 75th percentiles or the two values should be replaced with the difference between them in the table. I would prefer the second option.
► We corrected the values in Table 1 and presented the difference.

The ORs on page 8 for responding should be worded a little more carefully. The ORs of 1.04 and 1.03 for age are presumably "per year" and should be explicitly labelled as such (e.g. "OR 1.04 per year"). Similarly for baseline MSD prevalence. For the final sentence "...no
relation between having VERSUS not having MSDs..." would make the reference group clearer.

► We explicitly labelled the ORs and corrected the final sentence on page 8.

Discretionary revisions:

The CI for recurrent foot complaints is given as (0-0). While this is correct when using the Normal approximation, an exact confidence interval would be more appropriate here. This would give (0-13.2). Other approaches for generating intervals with zero frequencies could also be used instead but I'd suggest exact intervals here.

► We used the Adjusted Wald method to calculate the confidence intervals for the proportions of sample sizes below 150 and corrected the confidence interval to 0-11.2. Furthermore, we added information on the method used for calculating the confidence intervals in the Method section.