Reviewer’s report

**Title:** Societal and individual burden of illness among fibromyalgia patients: correlations with disease severity and OMERACT core domains for fibromyalgia: a cross sectional study in France

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 17 October 2011

**Reviewer:** Anne Söderlund

**Reviewer's report:**

**General comments**

This study is important in enhancing knowledge of the medical readership. The patient group with fibromyalgia is indeed in need of further studies. Basically this manuscript is understandable, appropriate methods have been used, limitations have been discussed and the paper is quite well written.

However, I have some comments to be considered by the authors.

**Major compulsory revisions**

1. In the abstract aim the authors claim that they will provide a comprehensive assessment of burden associated with Fibromyalgia in France. However, they included only 88 of 680 000 patients in France and thus can hardly claim that they are describing the situation of FM patients in France. I recommend the authors to check the whole manuscript and be modest in their statements about generalizability of this study results.

2. In the “Method” section there is no information of the reliability of the different measures used in the study. This should be clarified with appropriate references for each measure.

3. In “Healthcare costs” what is the reason why treatment costs are limited only to medications? This patient group uses a lot for example Physiotherapist’s services and also Psychologist services. There could have been differences between severity groups in using these services. In my opinion, a lot of costs are most probably missing due to this bias in data collection. This is also important information since the patients were not very satisfied with the effect of medications. Is it possible to find this data in patient records?

4. In the “Results”, “Impact of FM on health-related quality of life and core symptoms” the second sentence include a measure (The Current Overall Health) that has not been described in the method section. Also, what was the reason to ask the patients their Pain Free Overall Health?

5. In the “Results” “Impact of FM severity” section, fourth paragraph it says that “Comparisons across FM severity level for the FIQ are not made…” However, these comparisons are presented in table 4. What is the reasoning with these contradictory results?
Minor essential revisions

1. The word “correlation” is used in the abstract aim. Correlation leads the reader to think of correlational analyses. The authors studied differences between FM severity groups thus association would be better word to use.

2. In Methods, “Study design” section includes information of participants, how the study was conducted (procedure), and ethics. This section should be clarified through adding appropriate sub-headings.

3. In section “Patient questionnaires”, the first sentence claims that there were five health related quality of life measures. Obviously this is not true, only one measures HRQoL. Clarify this, please.

4. Change the colours to different structures in figure 2 and 3. This would help to understand the figures better.

Discretionary revisions

1. Consider shortening and focusing the title of this paper.

**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.