Reviewer's report

Title: Population-based Consultation Patterns in Patients with Shoulder Pain Diagnoses

Version: 1 Date: 23 August 2012

Reviewer: Poul Frost

Reviewer's report:

This register based study presents useful information on period prevalence of consultation for shoulder disorders in primary care in a large general population. The paper is well written with clear description of the registers and of the information obtainable from each of these. It gives a clear presentation of the results, an informative table and figures, and provides a balanced discussion.

I have suggestions for a few discretionary revisions only to the manuscript:

1. A weakness relates to the coverage of the Skåne Health Care Register, since private sector consultations (about 30% of all consultations) are not captured by the register. To avoid underestimating the prevalence of consultations the authors simply reduce the denominator by 30% (page 7, line 11). This is reasonable if the part of the population that is covered by the private health sector has similar age and gender distributions and comparable work conditions to those in the population that are not covered by with private health insurances. If subjects covered by private sector health service tend to be younger and to have more favourable work conditions the estimated prevalences probably will be too high.

If possible, I suggest that some information is given about how comparable the two populations (those with and those without private health insurances) are expected to be to justify the choice of a simple 30% reduction of the population size. The issue also can be included in the discussion.

2. Page 5, line 7: the last to words (“of the”) should be deleted.

3. page 10, line 10: the comma used as decimal separator should be replace by a period.

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