Reviewer's report

Title: The effect of health promoting resources on work participation in population reporting musculoskeletal pain. A sample from the Nord-Trondelag Health Study, HUNT 3, Norway.

Version: 3 Date: 12 September 2012

Reviewer: Julitta Boschman

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions
1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
In the introduction one research question is now stated.
2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
It is clear now that data was gathered by means of an interview and a questionnaire, but it is unclear which measures were gathered by means of the interview and which measures were gathered by means of the questionnaire.
Headings in the methods section more meaningful than ‘survey measures’ might be added. (for example: personal, social and functional resources)
5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
The authors explain some of their findings or theories by relating for example ‘feeling strong’ to an absence of ‘neuroticism’. If their goal it to investigate this, they might want to check the correlation. As this is not the goal of the study, I would prefer the authors not to guess too much about possible mechanisms, unless supported by their research findings.
6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
The authors do state limitations of their study, but do not discuss how these limitations might have affected their findings. For example: ‘type of occupation is not taken into account and work-related MSP could potentially bias for the results’. (page 15). The reader is left with guessing how and to what extent this might have affected the results.
A limitations section in the discussion might be useful.
9. Is the writing acceptable?
The writing is not acceptable:
- In the Methods section there are still some verbs in present tense. (‘consists’, page 5; personal resources are measured, page 5, present health status is measured, page 6, etc. etc.). Please use the past tense in the Method section.
- Some sentences are not very well written and there are some typo errors, some examples: “knowledge one the area” (page 3), “musculoskeletal health call for an
understanding of both what in person’s life that contributes” (page 3), “the statistical analysis was tested for ... “(page 7), “to test for if there is any differences” (page 7), etc. Please have an editing service check for language errors. If this is an edited version, please have them check their work.

- Due to an overload of information on statistical procedures and statistical information, the results section is difficult to read. Perhaps the authors could check with a statistician whether all information needs to be reported in the results section and needs to be reported to understand the findings. If so, possibly a table with the additional statistical information would be useful.

- The heading ‘Crosstabs and chi-square variable relationships’ in the result section might be rephrased to a more meaningful heading.

- Please rephrase some awkward sentences, such as: “the method is a reliable prevalence study” (page 15).

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.