Reviewer's report

Title: Computer work and self-reported variables on anthropometric, computer usage, work ability, productivity, pain, and physical activity

Version: 2 Date: 10 May 2013

Reviewer: Morten Wærsted

Reviewer's report:

The manuscript has improved substantially since the last version. However, there are still some issues I think should be dealt with before I'll advice it to be published.

* Concerning the number of participants, the number invited is now stated to approximately 5000 and the number participating to 690. As I understood to former version of the manuscript, there was 804 subjects filling in the questionnaire, but only 690 of these returned a complete questionnaire and only these 690 were included. I'm not in a position to decide whether the authors should mention this detail. However, the figure 804 still “pops up” in the manuscript, at least in two places. In line 28 on page 5 you state “This study included all workers that completed the questionnaire (690 out of 804)”, but this information does not make much sense, as the reader has not earlier been presented with the issue of exclusion for not completing the questionnaire. In line 31 on page 11 the figure given in parentheses must relate to the 804 and not 690 (804 out of 5000 is approx. 16%, whereas 690 out of 5000 is approx. 14%).

* At the bottom of page 5 you state “Workers reporting pain intensity # 2 cm on the visual analogue scale (0-10 cm) in neck, shoulders, and arms for workers were considered to have musculoskeletal pain. Workers reporting pain intensity < 2 were considered pain free”. Why was the threshold of 2cm on the VAS chosen? Furthermore – when reading this first time, I got the impression that you reduced the information given in the VAS in all analyses. However, when reading all parts of the manuscript I got the impression the you only used this reduction of the pain data when you counted number of pain afflicted body regions. If so, this must be stated in the Methods section, and I suggest that this information is moved to the top of page 5 where you comment the pain variable. Preferably you could state that the pain variable is a continuous measure, but the special case of the number of afflicted regions. You should also state here (bottom page 4 / top page 5) that you measure pain on a visual analogue scale. Presently you only give this information in the cited part on the bottom of page 5. (In the cited part of the manuscript there is also some bad language – the “for workers” in the middle of the first sentence do not give meaning to me.)

* When discussing the limitations of sampling all data in a questionnaire (page 11), I think you should also discuss the possible bias of sampling both exposure and effect in the same questionnaire. As far as I could read, this point has not
been commented. This is a serious problem afflicting many epidemiological studies. Your advice on adding recordings of computer use and clinical examination would also address this problem.

* The mixture of continuous variables and count variables make the tables a bit “inelegant”. May be you could split the table with a new heading, so that the top part have the continues variables giving number, median and quartiles, while the lower part give the count variables? In Table 3 the text in the left column is bewildering, as you there state “… every day in the last 12 months”, but the “every day” does only apply to the last category. May be you could write “Number of days with ….. complaints in the last 12 months”?

* The language is much improved. However, there are still examples of misspellings and of bad language. One example is given above. Other examples are the sentence line 23-25 on page 3 “Office workers often report work-related discomfort and pain despite a lack of evidence between computer use and neck and upper extremities disorders” (what do you mean?), in the sentence line 14-16 on page 9 “Contrary to these studies, we did not found any significant correlation between ……….” (I suppose you should write “…. we did not find …..”), and in the sentence line 23-24 further down on page 9 “However, argument exit suggesting a relationship between complaint in the neck-shoulder and distal arm pain during mouse usage” (to make meaning to me you should either write “…. argument exists …..” or “…. arguments exist ….. ”, as the word “exit” do not fit in). I have not read the manuscript in order to find all misspellings, so please do another proof-reading of the entire manuscript.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

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

**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