Reviewer's report

Title: Is there a difference? Patients with chronic widespread pain and chronic local back pain in primary care - A comparative cross-sectional analysis

Version: 1 Date: 30 September 2013

Reviewer: Lise Hestbaek

Reviewer's report:

The manuscript presents very interesting data from a large GP-cohort. The manuscript is generally well written, the objectives are clear and the method suitable for answering the research question. The results are clearly presented and I have very few comments to these sections. However, I think the discussion needs more work.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Abstract, last sentence: It is hard to find evidence for this statement in the manuscript.
2. Study population, p 7: 58 GP included patients. Later it appears that 284 were invited. Although there is a reference to another article (in the paragraph above) I miss a description of who were invited.
3. Study population, p.7: “….general practitioners recruited consecutively all eligible patients….“This is hard to believe (the authors actually address this in the discussion). It is probably more correct to write “……were asked to include all ……”
4. Discussion: A very large part of the discussion is reeling off results from this and other studies. It would be nice with more in-depth discussion about possible reasons for discrepancies and most of all about the potential consequences of these findings, e.g. third paragraph: Bergman et al found lower social status – why? Fifth paragraph: Patients with CWP have increased rates of comorbidity – are there any implications of this in relation to treatment, prognosis etc.
5. Discussion, sixth paragraph: I don’t understand the authors’ point with this paragraph – what is the message?
6. Discussion, seventh paragraph: This might be pushing the conclusion a little further than the study justifies.
7. Discussion, 8th paragraph: What about internal validity?
8. Discussion: with reference to point 1, I think selection bias in relation to GPs (58/284) needs to be discussed.

Discretionary Revisions

Total group characteristics, p. 10: I don’t think retired people consider themselves as unemployed
**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