Reviewer's report

**Title:** Illness perceptions in the context of differing work participation outcomes: exploring the influence of significant others in persistent back pain

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 29 November 2012

**Reviewer:** Mandy Scheermesser

**Reviewer's report:**

1. Major Compulsory Revisions

Most major compulsory revisions concern the paragraph “Data analysis” of the manuscript.

The template analysis is an interesting qualitative method to explore the influence of significant others in persistent back pain perspectives on rehabilitation. Therefore, special attention should be given to comprehensive and transparent description of the data analysis, e.g. as described by Elliot et al. 1999.

Open issues and major points yet:

Please provide the numbers of conducted/realized interviews and characterise the cases (e.g. age, occupation, education, duration of low back pain), for example in a table.

Three overarching themes emerged: (1) Consequences of illness; (2) Nature of work and (3) Patient identity. How did these three overarching themes emerge?

Please describe themes/questions of the interview guideline

p. 26: “NK and KB checked the coding and analysis”. This information is very important because the point is a relevant aspect of qualitative research methodology. Hence, it should be included in the chapter “data analysis”.

Chapter Findings:

Please define the three different dimensions/categories at the beginning of each paragraph, similar to “Patient identity” (p. 17)

Furthermore, I think a numbering of the themes make sense (see themes in “data analysis”).

Chapter Discussion:

Please add recommendations for further research.

2. Minor Essential Revisions

p. 22, second paragraph: The reference “Waddell & Burton 2006” has the wrong format and is not included in the bibliography

3. Discretionary Revisions

No discretionary revisions.

**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