Reviewer's report

Title: Individual and work-related risk factors for musculoskeletal pain: a cross-sectional study among Estonian computer users

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Reviewer: Prawit Janwantanakul

Reviewer's report:

This paper described a cross-sectional study investigating the 12-month prevalence of musculoskeletal pain and the effects of individual and work-related risk factors among Estonian office workers using computers. The paper would be of interest to readers by providing more detailed and in-depth discussion of the findings (see details below).

Abstract

• The authors should mention that the prevalence investigated in this study was the 12 months.

• More information about the number of office workers approached and accepted to participate, the way of data collection, and risk factors should be included.

• The way that the authors reported the findings seems to me that the authors believed MSP in office workers, regardless of body regions, would cause by same risk factors. This hypothesis is not supported by recent evidence.

Introduction

• My main concern relates to the reason for conducting this study, i.e. no such study has been conducted in Estonia. The reason for conducting the study should relate to a gap in the literature or, in other words, the contribution of the study to the literature.

Methods

• Some details about how data were collected should be provided.

• Please provide a diagram used in this study to illustrate the body parts.

• I wonder about the reliability of information regarding the number of days experiencing pain in the past year. It relies heavily on memory. Should this be one of limitations of this study? In fact, the authors collected several subjective data. Another limitation of the study?

• Justification for collecting data regarding somatizing tendency would be useful.

• I am not sure what the difference between mental health and psychological risk factors is. Please clarify.

• I am quite surprised that the authors chose to eliminate the prevalence of knee and elbow pain at the point of data analysis. What was the point for collecting such data at the first place?
•More details regarding statistical analysis should be added, i.e. how the regression was carried out in step-by-step fashion, the level of statistical significance, number of missing data and its management.

Results
•Please describe the meaning of ‘mutually adjusted analyses’, probably in the statistical section.
•Some descriptive information regarding individual and work-related risk factors would be useful.

Discussion
•Some discussion for the differences in the findings between the present and previous studies is required for the 12-month prevalence and the associations between MSP and risk factors.
•Regarding the findings of impact of experiencing MSP (i.e. medical consultation, sickness absence), I don’t understand the hypothesis that the authors proposed. Did you say that it was relevant to the law in your country?
•I thought that using statistical analysis would reduce a chance occurrence. Would you have another explanation for reduced risk of experiencing MSP in current smokers and right-handedness?
•When the authors claimed that one of the strength of this study was employing validated and widely used questions to ascertain MSP and several risk factors, more information should be provided in the method section to demonstrate its validity.

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.