Reviewer's report

Title: Time trends in single versus concomitant neck and back pain in Finnish adolescents: results from national cross-sectional surveys from 1991 to 2011

Version: 2
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Reviewer: Katri Laimi

Reviewer's report:

I want to thank authors of the first article ever comparing national trends of single neck pain and single low back pain with widespread spinal pain in adolescence. Your article provides important new information challenging the studies of adolescents to drilling down to the reasons of internationally observed changes.

1. Major compulsory revisions: no
2. Minor essential revisions: no
3. Discretionary revisions:
   - In the last sentence of Chapter “Measurements” test-retest reliability was evaluated. Did “kappa coefficient 0.56 for both neck and low back pain” mean that value was 0.56 both for single neck pain and for single back pain or that 0.56 was for concomitant widespread pain?
   - In the second chapter of discussion: “We did not ask questions about pain in the thoracic spine, which could have further increased the prevalence of concomitant neck and low back pain and may have decreased the prevalence of neck pain alone”. This is possible, but not sure and there are no previous articles of this subject. I would leave this hypothesis away or explain it little more.
   - In the fourth chapter of discussion I do not understand the sentence “… cannot be explained by the current state of knowledge on determinants of adolescent pain” Does this simply mean that Determinants of adolescent pain have not been studied enough to know, why prevalence of concomitant pain is growing, while prevalence of single pain syndromes is constant?
   - Otherwise the text is very clear without changes. However, I would like to give the authors a possibility to check the text once more in this review process. Written English is of good quality, but I hope the first writer considers revising American English phrases away.

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest 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.