Reviewer's report

Title: The course of reported pain from different body regions- a longitudinal study

Version: 1 Date: 6 September 2005

Reviewer: Stefan Bergman

Reviewer's report:

General
An interesting study that adds to the knowledge of longstanding pain.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
1. Results second paragraph third line (and in abstract): How is "long-lasting" defined? Is it the same as "all the time"? This must be defined in method or discussed if not more defineable.
2. Results third paragraph: The report on different prevalences of persistence amongst women and men gives little information without confidence intervals.

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
1. I have problem with one sentence that occurs both in abstract and in the result: "..compared to those reporting no symptoms of fewer bodily locations". Should "of" be "or"?
2. No heading over "Background"
3. It would help the reader if the legend to figure 2 explained "other health problems" and "chronic symptoms".

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
1. In second last paragraph of Background the authors state that there is no studies on whether poor health is related to pain distribution (local or several locations). There is now one study that could add to the discussion: "Health status as measured by SF-36 reflects changes and predicts outcome in chronic musculoskeletal pain: a 3-year follow up study in the general population"; Bergman et al in Pain 2004, vol 108(1-2); 115-23

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
I have no competing interests’