Reviewer's report

Title: Coping and back problems: Part 1. Analysis of multiple data sources on an entire cross-sectional cohort of Swedish military recruits.

Version: 3 Date: 17 February 2006

Reviewer: Eugene J Carragee

Reviewer's report:

General

The manuscript reads more clearly now but still suffers from an assumption that everyone is an epidemiologist. The authors take for granted that the distinction between certain epidemiological and statistical terms and their implications are well understood by the BMC Muscular Disorders readers (for instance the difference between statistical interactions and associations or the actual meaning of the area under an ROC). I would submit that referring a general readership to epidemiological textbooks is unhelpful, misreads to audience and impairs the impact of the manuscript. I believe the authors can do better but have chosen not to. I leave it to thee editors to determine if any further work should be done to make the manuscript more accessible. Since these issues were raised in the first round by reviewers with specialty interest in this area, I think the general audience will be even more confused.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

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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)

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

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What next?: Accept after discretionary revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests'