Reviewer’s report

Title: Musculoskeletal disorders in shipyard industry: prevalence, health care use and absenteeism

Version: 1 Date: 30 September 2006

Reviewer: Irina Rivilis

Reviewer’s report:

General

The article is interesting and for the most part presents information that has not been researched previously, to the extent that the literature on MSK and sickness absence in shipyard workers is sparse and is therefore important to present. While the objectives, methods, and results are well described for the most part, numerous problems such as lack of clarity in the writing warrant revisions. Prior to publication in this journal it is suggested that the authors address several minor issues as outlined below:

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

NA

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. The conclusion presented in the abstract – as well as in the discussion, does not seem to reflect the results of the study. The authors present information on sickness absence and health care use due to musculoskeletal complaints, with no mention of interventions or intervention effectiveness. Therefore, it is recommended that the authors revise the conclusion to better reflect the results of the study, without referring to interventions as none were carried out in this study.

2. There are numerous instances throughout the text where the writing needs correction – mostly grammatically. It is advised that the authors address this issue, perhaps by having a native English speaker go over the text.

3. It would help the reader if the authors clarify what jobs white collar workers carry out, as only the jobs of the blue collars were mentioned in the methods.

4. The discussion portion of the article needs to be revised to better explain the observed results. As it is written currently, the first 2 pages of the discussion section are mostly restating the results, it would be better to discuss the results and offer explanations for the observed relationships, rather than rewriting the results that are already mentioned in the previous sections.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

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

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests