Reviewer's report

Title: Prevalence of and risk factors for different measures of low back pain among female nursing aides in Taiwanese nursing homes

Version: 4 Date: 28 February 2007

Reviewer: Lise Hestbaek

Reviewer's report:

General
The authors should be commended for the extensive attention to detail in the study design. I find the study scientifically sound and the collection of data seems to carried out in a very conscientious manner.
1. The question posed is not new but well defined.
2. The methods are appropriate and well described with sufficient details.
3. The data seem sound and well controlled.
4. The manuscript does not quite adhere to the relevant standards for reporting.
5. The discussion and conclusions are adequately supported by the data.
6. The title and abstract accurately convey what has been found.
7. The writing is not acceptable.

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

1. Page 6, 1. st paragraph: Only higher and highest risk tasks were included in the HRPHT-count. Nevertheless, it is counted as 0.5 if two NAs cooperate on a task. Does this not reduce the level of the individual load to below the limit for "higher risk tasks"? As I read the text, it should not be included - may be you can provide a sufficient explanation?

2. Page 6, 2.nd paragraph: I do not understand the calculation of the calculated sum of psychosocial workload assessment. Either the reported figures are wrong or the explanation must be clarified for me to understand it.

3. Statistical analyses: "The criteria for inclusion and exclusion during ..... were p=0.05 and p=0.10 .......". These p-values presumably refer to associations found in bivariate logistic regression analyses. This should be explained.

4. Statistical analyses: I dont think body height and BMI should be included in the same regression model, as height then is included twice (as is noted in relation to other variables).

5. Page 7, last sentence- first sentence page 8: ".... the study participants were.... lower education level, and older age ........"

6. Results: Results of the presumably performed bivariate logistic regression analyses should be BRIEFLY described (they are discussed in the discussion-section, but not reported).

7. The discussion is far too long. A lot of information is repeated and some information is irrelevant for the study. This section could be reduced by half!

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. Page 9, Discussion, line 5: should it not read: " A LOWER figure was also...."?

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

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'