Reviewer's report

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

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Reviewer: Francesco Violante

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General

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

Although this article is well written and methods seem sound, I have major concerns about its suitability for publication.

The aims of the study (as stated by the authors) are:
“to investigate the prevalence of different measures of LBP among Taiwanese NAs” and
“to investigate the potential risk factors associated with each of the LBP-related measures”.

In my view the first is a rather narrow/local aim, but my main concern is about the end-points of the study and the limited number of subjects investigated.

The authors used five different measures:
- acute LBP (at least one day), and, in these 161 subjects:
  - chronic LBP (21 subjects)
  - intense pain (93 subjects)
  - seeking medical care (107 subjects)
  - taking sick leave (26 subjects).

These end-points are different in their nature (duration of pain, intensity without relation to the duration, behaviour of the subject related to the pain) but they are related to each other and this, in turn, affects their relation to the risk factors investigated.

In the result section the authors do not provide information on the overlapping of the categories of the end-points (the initial 161 with LBP subjects sum-up to 247 in the additional 4 end-points) and the subjects in the chronic LBP and sick leave categories are too few to warrant any sound conclusion about the relation to the risk factors investigated, which in my view may largely be due to chance.

I am sorry to disappoint the authors, but for these reasons I cannot recommend the paper for publication.

What next?: Reject because too small an advance to publish

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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

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.