Author's response to reviews

Title: Is a history of work-related low back injury associated with prevalent low back pain and depression in the general population?

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editors:

Thank you for your acceptance, in principle, of our manuscript. Please find attached our revised manuscript along with our responses to our reviewers. Once again, we thank both the BMC editors and our reviewers for their thoughtful comments and suggestions.

Sincerely,

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We thank the reviewers for their thoughtful reading and suggestions. Our responses to their comments are in italics below each comment.

**Reviewer 1: Peter R. Croft**

**Discretionary revisions:**

1. I suggest that the authors add a few sentences to the "strengths" section of their discussion to emphasize the finding that the analysis of the second variable gave very similar results to the analysis of the main variable - this seems to me to be an important strength to emphasize since it provides an empirical answer to the concern about use of a single question.
   a. Revision made. Thank you for the suggestion.

2. I suggest also that in the well-written passage in the [limitations] section about cause and effect that they point out that this arises because they are using "retrospective recall of injury" as a measure of prior exposure.
   a. *We feel that this passage clearly stipulates the reasons why causal inferences cannot be made with cross-sectional analyses, two of these being the issues of temporality and having to rely on self-report recall of injury as opposed to complete medical histories. We have opted to leave this passage as is.*

*Thank you for your review and acceptance of our manuscript.*

**Reviewer 2: Jan Hartvigsen**

*Thank you for your review and acceptance of our manuscript.*

**Reviewer 3: Radoslaw Wasiak**

**Minor essential revisions:**

1. The authors are correct stating in their response (3.1) that low back pain and low back injury are not the same thing. However, they do not outline that difference in the manuscript. Perhaps it is worth while doing so, as the background section does use a lot of literature on low back pain.
   a. *We have made note of this in the Background (last sentence of paragraph 3) and feel that it has strengthened the rationale for our analysis. Thank you for the suggestion.*

2. I believe that the authors should run their regressions with all (or most, see concern below) the variables as it would help them evaluate the robustness of findings……only thing I would worry about is if there is collinearity present between some independent variables - in that case only one variable should be included. Findings from this regression regarding the main independent variable of interest can then be stated in a
sentence (ie, whether they are the same or different from the technique used by the authors).

a. We have decided to maintain our position with regards to our regression analyses and our overall analytic strategy.

Thank you for your review and acceptance of our manuscript.

Reviewer 4: Leo A.M. Elders

Thank you for your review and acceptance of our manuscript.