Reviewer's report

Title: Comparison of two measures of physical work load in hospital personnel: A cross-sectional study

Version: 2 Date: 13 August 2007

Reviewer: Giedrius Vanagas

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General
LBP is a frequent cause of unspecific musculoskeletal pain among hospital personnel compared to many other occupational groups. The aim of present study was to compare two self-reported measures of work demands and their association with LBP.

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

Authors in the presented manuscript concluded that number of patient handling tasks (PHT) is a more feasible measure of exposure when assessing the risk of LBP compared to more advanced measures of physical load on the lower lumbar spine. Present study involves different hospital wards (Orthopaedic and Psychiatric). By work profile in those wards should be different work demands (physical and psychological) as in Orthopaedic ward diversely from Psychiatric ward patients are with limited ability to move and it would require more physical work demands per patient (our expectations are confirmed also in table 3), eg Psychiatric ward is in different situation and we can expect that accordingly it would require more psychological work demands. As psychological work demands authors have presented as a part of study methodology, it would be beneficial to present in table 4 and 5 analysis of data comparing POR in wards to PHT, physical and psychological work demands.

Autors should make more attention to methodological limitations of the study. Table 4 presenting evidence to the impact on LBP of demografic characteristics and it would be beneficial to discuss why not other study designs were used in the present study and how authors manage with confoundings in present study.

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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)

Abbreviations should be explained after first mentioned (e.g. POR)

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)