Reviewer’s report

Title: Socioeconomic conditions and number of pain sites in women

Version: 2 Date: 31 January 2012

Reviewer: Haitze Janko de Vries

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The authors replied to most comments satisfactory, however, I still have a major concern with the study population(s). I maintain that two research questions interfere with each other:

   a) what is the association between socioeconomic conditions and NPS in women?

   b) is being a gynecological cancer survivor related to more NPS?

   These two questions should be answered in two different studies.

   - Question 1 can be answered with the General population group (n=493). The 493 subjects in the General population group are reasonably equal distributed (table 3: 19.7% quartile 1; 24.3% quartile 2; 26.6% quartile 3; 29.4% quartile 4), so there appear to be sufficient subjects in each category of Socioeconomic conditions. Without including the Gynecological cancer survivors group, still the whole range of socioeconomic status is available.

   - Question 2 can be answered with the Gynecological cancer survivors group (n=160) with the General population group (n=493) as control group.

The aim of the study under review was to explore the relationship between socioeconomic conditions and NPS in women. To investigate this goal, no group of cancer survivors is needed, but a random selection from the population.

I fully agree with the authors that information on gynecological cancer survivorship not being associated with NPS is important information for clinicians and their patients. But that was not the aim of this study. Including the Gynecological cancer survivors entails a potential bias in answering the question “what is the association between socioeconomic conditions and NPS in women”.

In ref. 18 (Rannestad & Skjeldestad, 2007) was described in the discussion: “we found pain to be associated with low income and a history of gynecological cancer, ...”. This raises some doubt about being both groups identical concerning pain related variables.

In my opinion, in the present study under review, the authors should only use the General population (n=493). Probably, the results will be the same, but the credibility of the study will increase.

2. The NPS in the Gyn. cancer survivor group and the General population is not
transparent. In table 2 the authors should have presented the percentages of NPS in both groups, with p-value.

**Discretionary Revisions**

Methods, socioeconomic condition, last sentence: change “average to poor” # poor to average

The authors could consider to use a paper of Miranda et al. (Musculoskeletal pain at multiple sites and its effects on work ability in a general working population. Occup Environ Med, 2009) as reference.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**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