Author's response to reviews

**Title**: Pain-related psychological cognitions and behaviours increase the likelihood of sick leave due to neck pain: findings from the Nurses and Midwives e-Cohort study

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**Author's response to reviews**: see over
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Professor Natalie Pafitis  
Executive Editor  
BMC Public Health  
BioMed Central  
236 Gray’s Inn Road  
London WC1X 8HB  
United Kingdom

Dear Professor Pafitis

Please find enclosed a copy of our paper entitled “Pain-related psychological cognitions and behaviours increase the likelihood of sick leave due to neck pain: findings from the Nurses and Midwives e-Cohort study” that we would like you to consider for publication in your journal, BMC Public Health.

We believe the findings of this paper are both nationally and internationally important and novel. This paper follows on from our previous work: Dawson AP, Schluter PJ, Hodges PW, Stewart S, Turner C: Fear of movement, passive coping, manual handling, and severe or radiating pain increase the likelihood of sick leave due to low back pain. Pain 2011, 152:1517-1524 – a paper published late in 2011 and already having been cited 8 times (according to Scopus). The epidemiological information contained in the paper will hopefully inform and direct further researchers in conceiving and measuring this important, but often neglected, construct and area.

Ethical approval for the NMeS was granted clearance by the University of Queensland’s Behavioural and Social Science Ethics Review Committee (No. 2005000696) and the Massey University Human Ethics Committee (Wellington: No. 05/71). These details appear in the manuscript. The study complied with the ethical standards for human experimentation as established by the Helsinki Declaration 1995 (as revised in Edinburgh 2000). Consent was sought and obtained from the study’s participants.
Funding for the NMeS is supported by grants from the Australian Research Council (LP0562102), Australian National Health and Medical Research Council (2005002108) and New Zealand Health Research Council (456163). Industry partners providing additional funding include: Queensland Health, the South Australian Department of Health, Injury Prevention and Control Australia (Pty Ltd), Nursing Council of New Zealand and the Macquarie Bank Foundation. Industry partners providing in-kind support for the project include: Queensland Nursing Council, Nurses and Midwives Board of New South Wales, Nurses Board of Tasmania, Nurses Board of Western Australia, Nurses Board of the Australian Capital Territory and Nursing Council of New Zealand. Corporate sponsors include Virgin Blue, Virgin Atlantic and MessageNet. These details also appear in the manuscript.

All authors have contributed significantly to this study and we are in agreement with the contents of the manuscript. We accept full responsibility for the conduct of the study, had access to the data, and controlled the decision to publish. There were no potential conflicts of interest known to exist for any of the named authors. No part of this paper has been previously published, nor is it concurrently submitted elsewhere.

Following on from your email of the 6th June, we replied (via email, and repeated here): With due respect, the article is based on a large sample of nurses - but we believe that the results are generalisable and of interest to a wider public health audience (hence our choice of this journal [BMC Public Health]). And, as such, it hasn't been written from a 'nursing work-force' perspective (which would require quite a different framing and re-write). However, if the article, as written, sits well within BMC Nursing, we would be happy to have it considered there. We will be guided by you. We have added the statement of 'competing interests' to the manuscript.

Please direct all correspondence regarding this paper to Professor Philip Schluter at the above postal or email address, or by telephone: +64-3-366 7001 x 44357. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you require further information or clarification. We look forward to learning the outcome of your deliberations.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Professor Philip Schluter