Reviewer's report

Title: Musculoskeletal disorders risk factors among nursing professionals in low resource settings: a cross-sectional study in Uganda.

Version: 4
Date: 10 December 2013

Reviewer: Chidozie Mbada

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the revised manuscript. The authors have addressed most of the issues raised. However, below are still some minor essential revisions that should be addressed to make the manuscript better.

Abstract:
“Few epidemiological studies on MSD (among what population?) have been carried out in sub-Saharan Africa”. A search through literature shows there is substantial data on MSD in Africa and it is still populating. However, data are skewed to certain populations more than the others. Therefore, the authors should indicate “the population” where there is the dearth of studies.

Methods:
“This was a cross-sectional study of MSD among 880 nursing professionals from five hospitals in Uganda “......”MSD among nurses....” recast as “This was a cross-sectional study on MSD among 880 nursing professionals from five selected hospitals in Uganda”

“........... Nordic Musculoskeletal questionnaires respectively”

“Statistical analysis included the Chi square test and logistic regression analysis. The level of significance was set at <0.05 for all statistical tests” Recast as “Descriptive (mean, standard deviation and percentages) and inferential (Chi square test and logistic regression analysis) statistics were used to analyze data. Alpha level was set at p<0.05. “

Result
The average age was 35.4 years (SD 10.7 years) and 85.7% were female” recast as “The average age of the respondents was 35.4 (SD 10.7) years and a majority were female (85.7%).

“35.4 years (SD 10.7 years) as 35.4 (SD 10.7) years”
“43.7 hours (SD 18.9 hours) as 43.7 (SD 18.9) hours”
Methods

“The use of these questionnaires for assessing MSD has been validated in other publications and shown to be acceptable [9, 17-21]...........” It will be better to state the range of the values of the questionnaires as submitted in the previous studies quoted here.

“........adjusted to our local situation for easy understanding” (Do you mean the Ugandan setting”)

Having described the WHO guidelines required for conducting research on humans as used in this study as “The study was conducted according to the WHO guidelines required for conducting research on humans [24]. The study was conducted in accordance with three basic ethical principles, namely respect for persons, beneficence and justice”. I think the sentences should be deleted as the statement on ethical review and approval has covered for it. Then the references should be adjusted to reflect the change made.

Data analysis

Traditionally, after data cleaning, descriptive analysis should be mentioned first before others. Furthermore, recast “The results of the analysis were then summarized using frequencies and descriptive statistics” as descriptive statistics of mean, standard deviation and frequency were used to summarize data”. (NB: Frequencies, mean etc are descriptive tests).

Delete “.... for all statistical tests” (Alpha level does not apply to descriptive tests).

Results:

“........ distributed to nursing staff from 5 hospitals in Uganda” please deleted, the information is already stated appropriately in the method section.

- Please refer to the nursing professionals as “respondents” under your method section.

Discussion

In this paper we set out to assess the work related musculoskeletal disorders, and associated risk factors among nursing professionals in Uganda. Recast as “This study assess the work related musculoskeletal disorders, and associated risk factors among nursing professionals in Uganda”.

“We found several significant factors associated with MSD .....” Avoid the use of personal articles in scientific writing. Instead This study found several................

“We came across only one African..... (Ditto).

The claim that “No study has been done on musculoskeletal pain in the Ugandan general population...” is rather outrageous. I think it is safer to claim, that to the knowledge of the authors, there is an apparent dearth of ............... (Though Africa contribute only 1% of research output, a lot of studies are carried out in Africa but
are not published, hence, they are not visible).
.... see table 3 – Do not refer to tables or additional files in discussion.

“however in our study there was no significant association between MSDs ...” Avoid the use of personal articles in scientific writing.

Level of interest
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- An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English
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- Acceptable

Statistical review
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- No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician. However, note the following comments

Declaration of competing interests

I declare that I have no competing interests.

- Accept after minor essential revisions