Reviewer’s report

Title: Coping strategies, stress, physical exercise and sleep in patients with unexplained chest pain

Version: 3 Date: 13 September 2006

Reviewer: Cecilia Cheng

Reviewer’s report:

General

The authors have addressed an important and interesting topic by examining the relationships among coping, stressful events, physical exercise, and symptoms among unexplained chest pain in Sweden. The sample size is adequate and the statistical analyses were appropriately conducted. Moreover, the authors should be applauded for their attempt to translate their research findings into practical implications for the design of intervention programs.

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

1. There are a number of coping measures currently available and have been frequently used by coping researchers worldwide. Why did the authors use an unusual measure—Jalowiec Coping Scale—to assess coping? The author needs to explain in greater details why this unusual measure is used.

2. The authors have used confrontive, emotive, and palliative coping throughout their papers. How these coping strategies are labeled sound odd and unfamiliar to coping researchers. The authors mentioned that the coping measure was derived from Lazarus and Folkman’s theory of coping, but the coping strategies have been categorized into problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping in this theory. I wonder if confrontive coping refers to problem-focused coping, and emotive coping refers to emotion-focused coping. What about palliative coping?

3. The authors have cited references providing information on the psychometric properties of various measures used in their study. It seems that the references cited by them refer to the original (English) version of the measures. If this is the case, the psychometric properties (such as reliability and validity) of the Swedish version of all the measures should be mentioned.

4. The authors have used an item to assess physical exercise. Is it reliable to use just one item for such an assessment? Have previous studies used the same rating scale in assessing this variable? If yes, it will be better to cite such references as a support.

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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)

As a usual practice, descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) of all the variables tested in this study should be summarized in a table. Another table showing the interrelationships among all the variables should also be included. Please insert these two important tables.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests