Reviewer's report

Title: Rehabilitation time before disability pension

Version: 3 Date: 10 September 2012

Reviewer: Pirjo Juvonen-Posti

Reviewer's report:

1. The outcomes of the study described in this article are interesting.
2. MCR. Clarify the selection criteria of the cases, which were followed. The authors describe that they have follow-up data for 18 years, but I got the impression that for this article they have first chosen the cases who were granted the disability pension and then gathered the follow-up data-- so they have left out the cases who applied the pension but weren't granted. If this selection exists, it should be clarified and mentioned also in the limitations of this study.
3. MCR. Clarify the criteria for the "has been unemployed during follow-up" f.e.x the length of unemployment, the continuity of the unemployment.
4. MCR. Please check the use of the present and past tenses. . . and the sentence (page 6/Disability pension) . . "and covers all cases of disability pensions of at least 50% in Norway." I have read it so that the granting criteria is "at least 50%" and the data covers all these cases,
5. DR. Two remarks for further discussion: The follow-up data didn't include return to work or re-employment attempts, could these rehabilitation paths be different, if that information had been available. The complex biopsychosocial arena for work disability and returning to work is quite well discussed here, the authors missed only the information of the work and working conditions - is there something that could be discussed also here.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests,