Reviewer's report

Title: The effects of improving hospital physicians' working conditions on patient care: A prospective, controlled intervention study

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Reviewer: Tores Theorell

Reviewer's report:

Psychosocial intervention evaluations are very much needed and it is great that the authors have done this intervention trial. The intervention program as well as the questionnaires are adequate for this purpose and the authors have interesting discussions of their findings and the literature.

Major compulsory revisions: This trial suffers from the same problems that almost all intervention trials encounter: A relatively low participation rate among the physicians is acceptable. Between 54 and 70% participation is a relatively good participation rate for this kind of physician study although it is a matter of concern for the reader that the authors state: "But only a minority of physicians was identical subjects at both waves of assessment, given a high degree of professional mobility". It would be good if the reader could get exact numbers of physicians in the two groups participating in both data collections. It is also a bit unclear how the time factor has been handled. My guess is that the time factor has been treated like a within group factor. Given that the number of physicians participating in both waves was low I can accept that. But the reader should also get information regarding results from a true mixed model ANOVA (time as a within subject factor and group as a between subject factor) although this may be insignificant due to small numbers. With regard to the patient data I do not have the same demands since the patients are likely to have been exchanged to a substantial extent. As the authors discuss it is indeed a matter of concern however that there was quite a difference in participation rate at follow up between patients in the CG and IG respectively. This could give rise to both under- and overestimation of the true intervention effect. The reader should get a better discussion of this.

Minor essential revisions

The language is very good but there are a couple of typos which should be corrected after proof reading

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a
statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I have no competing interests