Reviewer’s report

Title: Development of a workplace intervention for employees sick-listed with stress-related mental disorders: Intervention Mapping as a useful tool.

Version: 2 Date: 4 April 2007

Reviewer: Gregory Murphy

Reviewer’s report:

General

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

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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)

“Development of a workplace intervention for employees sick-listed with stress-related mental disorders: Intervention-mapping as a useful tool.”

Reviewer Comments.

This paper describes the development of a workplace intervention for those absent from work for reasons of psychological distress. The main strength of the paper is that, besides addressing an escalating problem (mental-health-related work absence), the intervention developed is extremely sound theoretically. Validated constructs from applied social and clinical psychology form the basis for the ASE model of attitudes, social influence and self-efficacy which underpins the intervention approach proposed for this novel population – those absent from work because of psychological distress.

The weaknesses of the paper are all minor and should be addressed in any revision:

i) Occasional deviations from conventional English expression. The whole paper needs to be reviewed by a native-English writer.

ii) Stronger reference support should be provided for the assertion made in the fourth sentence about interventions being effective for work-related mental health problems. One of the two references cited pertains to self-employment which arguably has many characteristics not similar to those of employment within a formal organization.

iii) The intervention seems based on the pre-existence of good employer-employee relations. This cannot be assumed in many situations, particularly in countries such as Australia or the United States of America where there is a more adversarial stance. This should be mentioned as a limitation of the approach.

iv) Similarly, some comparison with the work of Shrey in the area of “workplace disability management” (see Shrey and Lacerte, 1991) would be of interest to readers from outside western Europe.

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La Trobe University.

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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: 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 declare that I have no competing interests