Author's response to reviews

**Title:** High workload and job stress are associated with lower practice performance in general practice: an observational study in 239 general practices in the Netherlands

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**Author's response to reviews:** see over
Hilversum, 27-5-2009

Dear Roxane,

The reaction of both reviewers was very positive and we are happy that they agreed on the changes in the paper “High workload and job stress are associated with lower practice performance in general practice”.

To answer the question of reviewer I:

*There are two major changes between the article versions which have not been explained to me. The number of GP practices have declined from 249 in the original article to 239 and Table 1 shows a number of significant changes in the demographics of the GPs. Was there a data flaw in the earlier version? This change has not significantly changed the conclusions. In Discussion principal findings the number of hours a GP needs to work to score over 80% on measures of practice performance has declined from 46 in the earlier version to 40 in the last version.*

In the previous letter we explained that our data needed correction. The text was:

“*We found to our surprise that a number of practices with inexplicable low working hours had used the list size of the practice without correcting for having a second colleague. Also, one practice used the list size of the practice of four GPs but the workload was calculated as if they were single handed. We have now omitted these practices from our set except for the four single handed GPs, where we could simply correct the practice size. We repeated all the analyses after we had corrected the data. The graph in figure 1 became more linear. We had to adjust the results because the relation between workload and job stress and the patient's opinion of organization of the surgery did not reach significance now. The changes have been integrated in the results, summary and the discussion.*”

We omitted to mention that the number of practices went therefore down from 249 to 239, because practices that had filled out workload erroneously had to be excluded. This also changed the score of hours worked in the practice.

This hopefully addressed the point made by the reviewer I.

Because of his contributions and position in the department we changed the order of the co-authors putting Michel Wensing last. It is relevant for him to mention his position in Heidelberg University Hospital. Department of General Practice and Health Services Research.

Considering the above we like to ask if you are willing to review the paper again.

On behalf of the authors

Pieter van den Hombergh