**Reviewer's report**

**Title:** Comparison of exhaustion symptoms in patients with stress-related and other psychiatric and somatic diagnoses

**Version:** 0  **Date:** 13 Sep 2018

**Reviewer:** Ingibjorg Jonsdottir

**Reviewer's report:**

The manuscript has been substantially improved following revision. There are however still some remaining comments that I suggest that the authors should consider to further improve the manuscript.

**Major comment**

The conclusion and consequently the discussion on KEDS score for the somatic patients' needs to be revised. Firstly, no comparison is made between healthy controls and patients with somatic symptoms. So even if one can relate to previous publication, this comparison was no performed in this paper and thus the lengthy discussion of why patients with somatic symptoms report higher KEDS score is not motivated. Furthermore, the authors express it as a limitation that stress-related symptoms are not known in this group (except if it is reported as a secondary diagnosis). Since it is well known from the literature, also stated by the authors, that musculoskeletal symptoms and stress-related symptom frequently overlap, there is a good reason to believed that some self-reported symptoms of exhaustion are seen in patients with somatic complaints. The interesting data is that this does not reach the scores reported by of patient's primary seeking care for stress-related mental health problems. My recommendation is to shorten this part of the discussion.

The discussion is a bit long and could gain to be better organized but I think that above comment will fix most of this.

My other major comment is related to how many analyses are performed and how clinical relevant difference are in mean scores of an ordinal scale, and how clinical relevant the difference is say from 3.0 to 2.2 for one single item. The amount of comparisons made in table 4 is not warranted and the information is the same as shown in figure 2. Figure 2 visualize clearly how the different items are distributed in the different patient's groups. I suggest that the authors keep figure 2 and omit table 4 and the statistical calculation for each item.
Minor comments

There are several language errors and expressions that need to be corrected. Here are several examples but I urge the authors to carefully read through the paper.

In the abstract; "psychiatric diagnoses than stress" Please rephrase this as stress is not a psychiatric diagnosis.

The expression "questionnaire instruments" does not sound correct. Use either questionnaire or instrument. Even better is to use the same terms as the original authors that developed KEDS who referred to it as a scale.

The term elevated cannot be used in this paper as this indicates change from a lower to higher value and the study is cross-sectional. Showing scores are not a good expression either. I suggest that the authors use terms as "reported" i.e. patients with xx reported higher KEDS scores than patients with XX etc.

Please read through this sentence....."who presented at three departments of occupational medicine in Denmark" Firstly it should be "are presented", secondly "presenting patients might not be a suitable phrase, perhaps "seeking care" or "referred" might be used.

"table 1. Distribution of diagnoses in 698 patients". This heading is incomplete.

"Data indicate that stress-related health problems constitute a significant problem in Denmark as well although the lack of a combined register for diagnoses made in the primary and secondary health care makes it difficult to get a clear picture". Divide this sentence into two sentences, it is too long. Generally long sentence should be divided into two. Commas are missing here and there.

Considered using obtain instead of get, or use another phrase.

The authors referred to "The high level of exhaustion symptoms associated with problems related to employment and unemployment (Z56)". Compared to which levels? It is the second lowest measured in this study?

Please check the references; For instance are these two references' incomplete (Authority], 2015). (miljømedicin, 2012).
Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
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No

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
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