Reviewer’s report

Title: Depressive symptoms and early retirement intentions among Danish Eldercare workers: Cross-sectional and longitudinal analyses

Version: 2 Date: 30 March 2015

Reviewer: Jorma Seitsamo

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The topic is very important since depression among other mental problems is becoming more and more common cause of early and disability pensions in EU.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The major problem in this study is in study design: The longitudinal part restricts to those aged 45-57 years old who replied both study waves only, and as a result there is a very high attrition. This may bias the results.

In the attrition analysis chapter it is stated that 37% of those who did not return the questionnaire worked no longer at the particular workplace. Have these persons retired perhaps? Attrition analysis should be more thorough.

Minor essential revisions:

1. In the background the literature covering evr and retirement is quite old. Ref. 13, for instance from 1990. I believe that in most of EU countries there is a tendency to get rid of voluntary early retirement schedule. What is the situation in the 2010:ies?
2. In the final background chapter (dealing with the factors connected to evr) spouse’s retirement, financial factors, and medical conditions including self-rated health are not mentioned. These are certainly important factors when a person considers retirement.

Methods

3. Is there a reason not to include baseline data wave to the analysis? The follow-up time would be four years instead of two.

4. The researchers do not state whether they have information concerning the actual retirement of subjects. Now those over 60 years of age are excluded just because they might have retired from t1 to t2.

5. It is also important to know how many subjects reported “I don’t know” to the retirement intentions question. If there are hundreds of those, it could be important to report some characteristics.

The classification of MDI score is little problematic. Now a person’s score may change from one MDI category to another and still belong to an unchanged symptoms class.

Results
7. The authors do not report the baseline characteristics of the whole T1 study population. It is important, for instance, to know the distribution of depressive symptoms. Does it differ compared to the follow-up population? If there is differences which are the reasons?

8. The proportions of men and women is not reported either. One can only guess that there are not many male workers. Is it appropriate to just state that models were adjusted for gender?

9. If there is information about respondents’ economic situation and perhaps extra pensions plans, these should be included in the models at least to verify their significance. The same goes with spouse’s occupational status (at work/retired), and self-rated health.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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'