Reviewer’s report

Title: A cross-sectional study of fear-avoidance beliefs towards work among acute coronary syndrome survivors - relationships to adverse psychosocial job conditions and mediator effects in expected return to work

Version: 2 Date: 30 September 2015

Reviewer: Torill Helene Tveito

Reviewer’s report:

Major compulsory revisions:

Introduction
It is an interesting idea to examine fear-avoidance beliefs in employees with heart conditions, there might certainly be some new insights appearing as a result. However, the fear-avoidance model for musculoskeletal complaints was developed based on the scientific evidence that for persons with unspecific low back pain the best thing is to uphold normal activity as far as possible, hereunder remain working. This created high levels of controversies when first presented, but is now the prevailing view of the majority of the researchers in the field. Is there similar scientific evidence for the benefit of working for people with heart conditions? In any case, I suggest the authors discuss the rationale for examining fear-avoidance beliefs in this group.

I suggest that the authors modify the statement in line 64 that musculoskeletal conditions are attributed to ergonomic factors contrary to ACS which is attributed to job stress etc. Musculoskeletal conditions are also attributed to psychosocial work conditions, there is a vast literature on these relationships.

The explanations of the concepts in the JDC are not very exact, please extend with some more accurate explanations.

Methods
By substituting measures of effort from the ERI scale with the corresponding items in job demands from the DCSQ, ERI from this study may be different from ERI reported in other studies. Also, can the authors state they use two models to examine psychosocial factors, when job demands (one of two factors in the JDC model) also is used as the nominator when calculating ERI? Implications of this should be discussed in the Discussion section of the manuscript.

How was pre-morbid work ability measured and how was it used?

Results
Please avoid reporting results both in text and tables, choose one.

Discussion
Please do not present new results in the Discussion section. Table 5 and the information about non-respondents in the corresponding paragraph should be moved to results. The discussion of these results stays in the Discussion section.

References

In the reference list the book Healthy Work (ref 15) is listed with only one author. My copy of that book has 2 authors. Please revise and go through the other references on the list to ensure that there are no more errors.

General comments

Throughout the manuscript the authors use the concepts fear-avoidance, fear-avoidance beliefs, fear-avoidance variables, aversive work perceptions, and fear-avoidance perceptions (there may be others, these were picked from p 7). Please explain the difference between them. If they are the same, please choose one and stick to it.

Please explain all abbreviations and acronyms the first time they are used.

Minor/discretionary revisions

Table 1

Women estimate nearly one week more time until RTW than men. I think this is an interesting finding and deserves to be discussed. Of course, it may be confounding by indication, I suppose the authors do not have data to check that, but I suggest that it is mentioned at least as an area for future studies.

Table 4

Why are the authors presenting two different results for JDC? I guess it is models 1 and 2, but please say so.

General comments

The manuscript would benefit from a language revision from a native English speaker.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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