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: 6 October 2015

Reviewer: GERARD MOLLOY

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Major Compulsory Revisions

1. There are a number of points in the manuscript where the quality of expression makes it difficult to understand some sentences e.g. the second sentence of the abstract, the last sentence of the first paragraph of the introduction and the second sentence of the fourth paragraph of the introduction. The authors should get the paper proof read for clarity.

2. The R squared values for the regression models could be added to give readers a sense of the effect sizes observed for these associations.

3. Add P values to Table 5 to show whether differences exist between participants and non-respondents.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. In the 2nd sentence in the abstract there is word missing after “Knowledge”. Is this the missing word “about”?

2. In the methods section of the abstract you need to give the full definition of VGR?

3. Better to use the word “Participants” rather than “subjects”.

4. In the method it would be good to be clearer about what the primary criterion variable is? Expected return to work?

5. It would be good to specify that gender stratified analysis were carried out in the abstract.

6. The authors should add justification for the upper age of 65 years for the inclusion criteria. If the rationale is weak for this then it would be good to acknowledge the sampling bias this introduces and the consequences for external validity.

7. Perhaps more can be said about the reliability and validity of the expected time for return to work in the method section.

8. The authors should state whether their study has followed the STROBE statement guidelines: http://www.strobe-statement.org/

9. The authors could say more about the limitations of a cross-sectional design for
mediation analysis i.e. the temporal order of relationships cannot be established. Some methodologists suggest three points of measurement e.g. Lockhart, G., MacKinnon, D. P., & Ohlrich, V. (2011). Mediation analysis in psychosomatic medicine research. Psychosomatic Medicine, 73, 29–43.

10. Some of the variables identified as confounders could conceivably be mediators e.g. general mental health, of the association between job conditions and expected return to work. The authors could clarify the decision to designate variables as confounders.

Discretionary Revisions

1. The authors may want to reformulate the 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”

Perhaps the following would be clearer? Psychosocial job conditions, fear avoidance beliefs and expected return to work following acute coronary syndrome: a cross-sectional study of fear avoidance as a potential mediator

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