Author’s response to reviews

Title: The relative impact of smoking, alcohol use and drug use on general sickness absence. A cross-sectional study from Norwegian workplaces

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Assistant Editor of BMC Public Health,

We would like to thank the Assistant Editor for the comments and for the opportunity to revise our manuscript "The relative impact of smoking, alcohol use and drug use on general sickness absence. A cross-sectional study from Norwegian workplaces" (PUBH-D-19-00486R1).

A detailed item-by-item response to the comments follows below. Our replies are marked in italic.

1. Authors Contributions

-- Please include a statement in the Authors’ contributions section to the effect that all authors have read and approved the manuscript, and ensure that this is the case.

• Response: The following statement has been included in the Authors’ contributions section: All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

2. Abbreviations

-- If abbreviations are used in the text they should be defined in the text at first use, and a list of abbreviations should be provided just before the Declarations.

• Response: Abbreviations have been defined in the test at first use. A list of abbreviations has been provided before the Declarations

3. Consent
Many thanks for confirming in the section 'Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate', that the informed consent obtained was verbal. If verbal, please state the reason and whether the ethics committee approved this procedure.

- Response: The following information was added to the text: This study first recruited companies. To ensure that participation was informed and voluntary, all participants were approached individually. Written and verbal information about the project was given, and oral informed consent was obtained from all participants. The study was approved by the Regional Committee for Medical and Health Research Ethics.

4. Questionnaire

-- Please clarify whether the questionnaire used in your study was developed for this study or has previously been published elsewhere. If the questionnaire has been published elsewhere please provide a reference to it in your manuscript, if the questionnaire was developed for this study please upload an English language version as a supplementary file.

- Response: The questions used in this study was part of a larger Norwegian questionnaire developed for a study examining differences in alcohol, tobacco and drug use, and consequences specifically ascribed to use of these substances, in different lines of business in Norway. While the questions used for this purpose have been described elsewhere (e.g., Edvardsen et al., 2015), no previous study have applied the measure of «general sickness absence» previously. General sickness absence, and the measures of use of the respective substances, are described in our manuscript. However, we have added the following sentence to the description of the measures: «A detailed description of other questions included in the questionnaire can be found in Edvardsen et al. (2015).»

5. Consent for Publication

-- We note that you have included a ‘Consent for publication’ section in the Declarations. Consent for publication refers to consent for the publication of identifying images or other personal or clinical details of participants that compromise anonymity. Seeing as this is not applicable to your manuscript please state “Not Applicable” in this section.

- Response: We have added «Not Applicable» to the ‘Consent for publication’ section in the Declarations.

6. Response letter

-- Thank you for providing a response to the reviewers/Cover Letter. As these documents are no longer required at this stage of the publication process, please remove them from your submission’s supplementary files.
• Response: Thank you for pointing this out. We have removed the response to the reviewers/Cover Letter from our submission’s supplementary files.

7. Clean Manuscript

At this stage, please upload your manuscript as a single, final, clean version that does not contain any tracked changes, comments, highlights, strikethroughs or text in different colours. All relevant tables/figures/additional files should also be clean versions. Figures (and additional files) should remain uploaded as separate files. Please ensure that all figures, tables and additional-supplementary files are cited within the text.

• Response: A clean version of the manuscript has been uploaded. All uploaded tables are also clean versions.