Reviewer’s report

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

Version: 0 Date: 03 Mar 2019

Reviewer: Tuula Oksanen

Reviewer’s report:

Dear authors,

this is a study from Norway that examines the association of smoking (incl snus), alcohol and drug (medications and illegal drugs) use on general sickness absence using self-reported retrospective data on sickness absence.

The study questions and the reviewed literature seem to be Norway-centered, so this paper suits best to be published in a Norwegian medical journal. My other comments are below.

- I am missing the novelty and advancing the science here. The associations of smoking and alcohol use with sickness absence are well-established from prospective cohort studies.

- The literature review is lacking the main papers in the field and the recent advancements, such as Virtanen et al. Lifestyle factors and risk of sickness absence from work: a multicohort study. Lancet Public Health 2018.

- Drug use is not commonly defined as a life style issue. Of course, drugs are related to illnesses.

- Employees in Norway - who are they? Where do they work? Sickness absence rates differ a lot between occupations and branches of industry.

- Critical consideration about retrospective use of daily sickness absence from self-reports is needed.

- You should not use causal language such as impact.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.
Yes

**Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?**
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

No

**Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?**
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

**Quality of written English**
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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