Author’s response to reviews

Title: Factors associated with the prevalence of back pain and work absence in shipyard workers

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Risk factors for back pain in shipyard workers
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Dear Dr. James Mockridge and reviewers,
Thank you very much for your kind and helpful suggestions, we tried to correct the content according to your comments. Sincerely yours.
Toshiaki Takahashi and Seiji Watanabe.

Reviewer reports:
Prawit Janwantanakul (Reviewer 1): Risk factors for back pain in shipyard workers
This paper described a study investigating risk factors for back pain in shipyard workers. The paper would be of interest to readers in this area by providing more detailed in several sections and in-depth discussion of the findings (see details below). Additionally, the title should be modified to represent what was studied (e.g. the whole body versus the back, prevalence versus incidence).
Answer: Thank you very much for your kind suggestion. The title was corrected to “The relationship between back pain and work absence in shipyard workers.”

Introduction
Essentially, the introduction lacks details regarding literature review relating to shipyard. In other words, reports regarding the prevalence of the disease in shipyard workers, risk factors, and impact of having the disease should be included.
Answer: We added the sentence of details regarding literature review relating to shipyard including reports regarding the prevalence of the disease in shipyard workers, risk factors, and impact of having the disease in introduction. “In particular, low back pain among shipyard workers has a relatively high prevalence [8], which is influenced by psychological and psychosocial factors [9, 10]. It is a cause of absence from work [11] and low productivity. Therefore, an appropriate approach for musculoskeletal disorders such as low back pain is critically important [12, 13, 14]. Shipyard workers are forced to use fire and sustain bad posture in narrow spaces. This working environment and resulting posture create a physically harsh workplace. Several disorders have been reported among shipyard workers [15, 16, 17].”

Reference
The prevalence rate of musculoskeletal disorders in shipyard workers is estimated to be high because they must often adopt awkward postures and lift heavy loads. However, very few studies have investigated this population’s experience with musculoskeletal disorders, namely injuries or pain in the bones, joints, etc., and related medical consultations [18, 19].

The specific objectives of the study are also required. We added the sentence of objectives of the study, “The purpose of this study was to conduct a questionnaire survey of shipyard workers, and based on the results, performed medical examinations at their workplaces and provided them with advice on exercise regimens.”

Methods
Characteristics of participants should be moved to the result section. We moved the characteristics of participants to the result section. “The mean height of participants was 168.0±6.6 cm, and the mean weight was 67.2±12.3 kg.”

Please provide information how participants were selected in the study. We added the sentence of the participants in this study. “The number of employees of a single shipbuilding company was 436 workers with male 417 and female 19. There were 375 workers (male 361, female 14) who consent to this questionnaire survey. We got the valid responses all of 375 workers.”

Which type of research design was this study? Was it cross-sectional or prospective study? We added the sentence “This study was cross-sectional case control study.”

How was back pain defined in this study? We added the sentence “Have you had an experience when back pain or low back pain interfered with work? We divided responses into 4 groups: “no,” “only in the past,” “sometimes yes at present,” and “always yes.” We defined back pain yes as “sometimes yes at present” and “always yes.””

How was the body region defined? How many body regions were studied? We added the sentence “Based on the participants’ responses on the schema, we classified body regions as the neck, shoulder, elbow, upper arm, forearm, wrist joint, hand, back,