**Reviewer’s report**

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

**Version:** 0  **Date:** 20 Jul 2017

**Reviewer:** Kay Cooper

**Reviewer’s report:**

This is an interesting and worthwhile study exploring the relationship between various personal and work characteristics and low back pain in a sample of shipyard workers.

There are some revisions that I feel are required in order to provide further detail for the reader thereby enhancing the manuscript:

1. the term "used fire" appears in the abstract (line 48) and in the manuscript. A definition of what this means (e.g. welding?) would be useful for an international audience as I am not familiar with this term and think many others might not be

2. Several of the references are rather old (>10 years). It is not clear whether these are seminal works or a result of parse literature in the field - confirmation of either would be useful

3. The background is somewhat brief. What about discussing the issue of presenteeism? What about expanding on risk factors using literature from other, related industries? What about epidemiology of MSK disorders/LBP in the general population as justification?

4. There is no discussion of how the survey was developed. Is it based on previously used/validated tools? Has any work been done on its psychometric properties? Was it specially designed for this study? By whom and how? Were any aspects of validity considered?

5. Results pp8, line 5 "impact" suggests cause & effect which can not be attributed to a study of this nature

6. Page 9, line 15 - can you cite some of these previous studies?

7. Page 9, line 43, "several" previous studies are mentioned but not cited

8. Page 9, last paragraph - you suggest that your results contrast with previous studies - but you didn't explore marital status, night shifts etc...is this a limitation?

9. Page 12, paragraph 2 - the first sentence doesn't seem to have come from the results presented. What "training" is being referred to - this is confusing as first time mentioned.
10. The discussion could be enhanced by considering possible workplace health promotion interventions (perhaps the "training" is that?), employers responsibilities in addition to advice for employees

**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 recommend additional statistical review

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

Needs some language corrections before being published

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