Reviewer’s report

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

Version: 1 Date: 16 Sep 2017

Reviewer: Kay Cooper

Reviewer’s report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the revised version of your manuscript.

Whilst you have responded to the comments made, some of the points are still unclear, as follows:

Reviewer 2

Point 3: The background still has nothing on e.g. global burden of disease study, which I find surprising for a study in this field. Also, the purpose of study has been altered since the original manuscript and as it's written now it doesn't entirely make sense and doesn't read as a research objective - was the purpose not to explore the prevalence of musculoskeletal disorders? The bit about medical examinations and advice on exercise regimes isn't referred to again in the manuscript...were they part of the study or not? This is very confusing for the reader.

Point 4: You have added a sentence to the methods but this really needs to also be discussed as a limitation, e.g. could any important variables have been omitted from the survey; difficulty of comparing to previous research due to different items on surveys etc.

Point 5: I think you may have misunderstood my point...I was not suggesting that you change to "effect". I was making the point that using the term "impact" suggests that you can attribute cause & effect from a cross-sectional study of this nature - which is not the case. You need to review this.

Point 6: I can't see the original manuscript so can't actually see which sentence you have deleted I'm afraid

Point 8: Links with Point 4 above and the need to discuss the limitations of the tool

Point 10: As it's written the sentence you have added doesn't seem to make sense - what is it about interventions and responsibilities that you have considered? In what way? It also seems to be out of place in the limitation section, I would think it belongs in the discussion/conclusions

In addition: There is now a statement that this was a "cross-sectional case-control study" which I do not think is accurate. What were the cases and controls?

I think that further consideration and elaboration of these points is required.
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:

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