Reviewer’s report

Title: Factors influencing disability in patients with chronic low back pain attending a tertiary hospital in sub-Saharan Africa

Version: 0 Date: 07 Jul 2018

Reviewer: Nejc Sharabon

Reviewer's report:

GENERAL COMMENTS

The paper entitled "Factors influencing disability in patients with chronic low back pain attending a tertiary hospital in sub-Saharan Africa” is targeting one of the most common worldwide health problems. It is important contribution to fill the gaps in exploring the disability among CLBP around the world.

However, the aim of the study is to explore predictors influencing disability in CLBP patients. Given results should be interpreted with caution and should also enlighten other possible aspects: (1) are given variables really predictors or can be consequence/accompanying factor of CLBP, which is actually the cause for disability? (2) What about functional tests and strength of core muscles. Literature provides strong evidences, that weak core muscles are the main risk factor for CLBP.

According to that, authors should thoroughly review the literature base and improve readability.

There are several mismatching between tables and figures listed in body of the article and the one attached (e.g. numbers of tables and figures).

Based on the weaknesses of the manuscript, I am suggesting major revision (if possible) or rejection (if the improvements not possible because of the data limitations, et).

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

Background:

Page 5, Line 53: This study further showed…. Is this really what this study showed or is just a summary of literature?

Page 6, Line 58: ….impaired psychological wellbeing…all of which can be direct consequences of LBP. Psychological wellbeing is known also as a strong risk factor for CLBP. Statement should be rewritten.
Methods:

Page 8, Line 6-7: … worker, housewife, student, non-worker or retired… Nouns should be the same as are further used in tables.

Page 8, Line 10-11: … alcohol consumption (consumer or non-consumer)… What was the definition used state who is consumer and non-consumer.

Page 9, Line 47: … satisfaction with their sleep in the past month on a scale of 1 to 5. What is 1 and what is 5?

Page 9, Line 52: Patients’ weight and height were measured using standard procedures… Which standard procedure - references and which weight scale was used - model?

Page 10, Line 2: … number of days of restricted routine activity... How restricted routine was defined?

Data management and statistical analyses

Page 11, Line 4, 5: Multicolinearity should be checked for the variables included in the multivariable linear regression model.

Results:

Page 11, Line 44: Average work lost days… Not in table 2 as referred.

Page 12, Line 1, 2: Data and referral to tables mismatch.

Page 12, Line 17: … RMDQ scores when compared with counterparts without. Add referral to table on the end of the sentence.

Page 12, Line 19-21: Alcohol consumption (Figure 1) and sphincter dysfunction (Figure 2) had the greatest impact on the RMDQ. Are data significant or not?

Discussion:

Page 12, Line 46,47 and Page 13, Line 3,4: … four out of five CLBP patients had significant disability. Explain, 4 out of 5 is 80%.

Page 12, Line 54-59: Independent predictors of disability in our cohort of CLBP patients were present pain, days of work absence, psychological wellbeing, alcohol consumption and BBDS. Multicolinearity of this factors should be evaluated and stated.
Page 14, Line 7: While some studies report only a weak association [21],...Just one study is listed. Review the literature.

References:

Revise according to guidelines of the journal.

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

Yes

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

Unable to assess

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

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Needs some language corrections before being published
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