Author’s response to reviews

Title: Important work demands for reducing sickness absence among workers with neck or upper back pain: a prospective cohort study

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Version: 3 Date: 15 Oct 2019

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BMSD-D-19-00296
Important work demands for reducing sickness absence among workers with neck pain: a prospective cohort study Stefan Oliv, M.sc; Adnan Noor Baloch, M.Sc; Ewa Gustafsson, Phd; Mats Hagberg, Md, Phd; Helena Sandén, Md, Phd BMC Musculoskeletal Disorders

Dear Editor and Reviewers,

Thank you for your valuable comments. We have made alterations and clarifications in the manuscript following your comments. All alterations and clarifications are listed and highlighted below and in the revised manuscript.

Best regards
Stefan Oliv

Assistant Editor Comments:

1. Overlap
We note that the current submission contains some textual overlap with other previously published works, in particular:


While we understand that this is work that you have previously published, and some of the same ideas are contained in these publications, please be aware that we cannot condone the use of text from previously published work.

Please be informed that we cannot proceed with handling your manuscript before this issue is resolved, and the sections of text in question have been reformulated.

Thank you for your comment. We agree that there is a degree of overlap between these publications. We have reformulated parts of the methods section to reduce this overlap:

Included in the telephone interview part of the Work Environment survey the participants were asked about their current work ability. The question used to measure work ability were the first question from the Work Ability Index (WAI). This question, the work ability score (WAS), is as follows: “Assume that your work ability at its best has a value of 10 points. How many points would you give your current work ability?” with a score of 1–10.

Exposure to physical work demands were measured using self-report questions from the Work Environment survey. The questions used for this study were questions regarding whole body and hand/arm vibrations, lifting &gt; 15kg, frequent rotations of the trunk, work in a twisted or bent position, work while leaning forwards without support, work with hand at or above shoulder level, repetitive movements and seated work. A detailed description of the questions can be found in a previous publication (1). For this study, physical exposure was classified as high exposure for those that reported exposure “half of the time” or more and those who reported exposure less than half of the time were classified as having low exposure to that work demand.

Exposure to psychosocial work demands were made by indexing several self-report questions from the Work Environment survey. The variables used for psychosocial exposure in this study were the index for work demand, control and support. These variables were created by the SCB by indexing the answers for several questions into high or low. The index for demand was calculated based on four questions regarding: work stress, work attention, concentration and work load. The index for control was calculated using four questions regarding: work tempo, work organization, work planning and work influence. The support index was calculated using two questions regarding: support from supervisors and support from fellow workers. A detailed description of the questions and the index calculations can be found in a previous publication (1).

2. Authorship change form
We note that the order of authors has changed since original submission of the manuscript. In line with COPE guidelines, BioMed Central requires written confirmation from all authors that they agree with any proposed changes in authorship of submitted manuscripts or published articles.

-Thank you for your observation. Any changes to authorship order have been unintentional. I changed my title from mr to Phd since I received my Phd diploma on June 6th and maybe this was a cause of this.

3. Headings
In order to be in line with journal requirements, please include the following headings within your manuscript: Background, Methods, Results, Discussion, Conclusions

-Thank you for your observation. This have been changed.

4. Funding
In the Funding section, please also describe the role of the funding body in the design of the study and collection, analysis, and interpretation of data and in writing the manuscript.

-Thank you for your comment we have clarified this in the funding section:

Funding
This study was partly funded by Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Welfare. The funding body have not been involved in the design, data collection, analysis, interpretation or the writing of the manuscript.

5. Consent to participate
As your study is labelled as retrospective there is no need for consent to participate to be obtained, therefore please add a statement to this effect to your “ethical approval and consent to participate” section. If the ethics committee that approved the study ruled that no formal consent was necessary, please state this.

Ethics approval and consent to participate
This study received approval from the Regional Ethics Review Board in Gothenburg, Sweden (2015-04-16 Dnr. 221-15). Consent to participate were given in the Work Environment Survey.

We have also made a change in the data section:
Availability of data and materials
The data used for this study is available through Statistics Sweden.