Reviewer’s report

Title: "The Importance of Awareness, Support and Inner Strength to Balance Everyday Life" - A qualitative study about women's experiences of a workplace health promotion program in Human service organizations in Sweden.

Version: 0 Date: 23 Mar 2018

Reviewer: Nicola Magnavita

Reviewer's report:

In the introduction, the authors attribute the increase in absenteeism observed in Europe to the mental illnesses of women. I believe other factors should be mentioned, primarily the aging of the workforce [Poscia A, et al. Workplace Health Promotion for Older Workers: a Systematic Literature Review. BMC Health Serv Res. 2016 Sep 5;16 Suppl 5:329. doi: 10.1186/s12913-016-1518-z.]. Furthermore, women's absences are not only related to mental health, but also to social factors and the gender gap. Problems encountered by Swedish women who report higher levels of job strain due to less decision authority compared to men, are similar to those observed in Italian radiologists [Magnavita N. Is there a gender gap in Italian radiology? A cross-sectional study. Eur J Radiol. 2013; 82 (9): e502-e507 doi:pii: S0720-048X(13)00202-7. 10.1016/j.ejrad.2013.04.007 http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ejrad.2013.04.007].

There seems to be a problem with the definition of WLB. The authors observe that "Work-life balance has been defined in various ways, for instance, as a feeling of satisfaction due to a successful balance between work and private life". The authors should say that the lack of a definition accepted by all makes it difficult to compare studies on the subject. A subjective definition such as that proposed by the authors has an obvious limitation. A workaholic worker could in fact consider himself fully satisfied by work and family life, even if this is marginal or practically non-existent.

The study involved a small fraction of workers (55/1300, less than 5%) of a municipality. Later, only a small part of those who participated were interviewed. The authors must recognize that this is a strong limitation of their work.

The interviews also bring with them a strong share of the interviewer's subjectivity.

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?**
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No

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Yes

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Not relevant to this manuscript

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