**Reviewer’s report**

**Title:** An explorative qualitative study to determine the footwear needs of workers in standing environments

**Version:** 0  **Date:** 11 Jul 2017

**Reviewer:** Wesley Vernon

**Reviewer's report:**

This paper covers an area which is in need of much greater understanding and as such should be of wide interest to all health professionals, those involved in the fitting of footwear and footwear design alike. The paper is well written and from the work has utilized accepted qualitative research methods. Although the work is based on a relatively small sample from a limited range of occupations it nevertheless is the exploratory study described in the title and may generate additional work in this general area.

I have a number of comments to make on the paper for consideration/possible inor amendments to the paper which it is hoped will assist the authors in making a small number of changes prior to publication. These are as follows:

**Abstract:**

While the background to the work is succinctly explained it would be helpful if the authors could briefly state the purpose of the work prior to describing the methods employed.

In the abstract the authors suggest that "the development correct footwear and increased education regarding foot health and footwear choice could help to reduce the high number of musculoskeletal disorders repeatedly recorded in jobs that require prolonged periods of standing". Could it be more accurate to state "…….could help to reduce or improve the effect of the high number of musculoskeletal disorders repeatedly recorded ….. ".

**Introduction:**

For the purpose of this work have the authors used the term "standing" to describe long individuals spending long periods on their feet during their work whether this involves standing and ambulation or is it intended to denote those occupations where time on one's is predominantly "standing" with minimal ambulation. Please could the authors consider briefly elaborating to clarify the exact meaning of the term "standing" within the paper to assist the reader.
Under benefits to employers, could this also include a potential reduction in the risk of civil actions being taken against them by employees who claim that the duty of care of their employers has been neglected in relation to their footwear needs, particularly where wearing occupation-specific footwear (eg safety footwear) is a pre-requisite?

Method:

(Lines 125/6). The comment "Results were viewed by a second researcher (AW) for agreement" is a little difficult to understand as currently written. Please could the authors consider re- wording this comment to assist the reader.

Results:

(Section 3.1.2 Comfort) Where comfort is being considered here one comment captured was that comfortable shoes were described as being those shoes in which one was "able to wear them anytime anywhere'. Could it be the case that this comment also suggested that there may be considerations of style/appearance as well as the actual "feel" of the shoe on the foot?

(Section 3.2.7 Individualisation) On similar lines to the above comment, under "tailoring", could this also include appearance or was this simply about fit alone (which is mentioned here)?

(Section 3.3.2 Style) The comment is made here that "There was agreement that style did not matter...". Did all participants agree or instead was it the majority or a large proportion of participants? Does this contradict the comment that chefs showed preference for specific shoe brands which were "trendy at the moment" and with one chef stating that "I like them as a brand"?

Discussion:

(Line 334) As per my earlier query re: whether "standing" included ambulatory activity, reference is made here to high proportions of workers experiencing MSD problems "associated with the long hours standing and walking". Again, please could the authors clarify the meaning of "standing" in the context of the research they are reporting.

(Line 416) Typo here "Participant's" should read as "Participants".

The discussion focused strongly on the benefits of improving footwear design in order to manage and improve the situations described in this paper. No mention is made of the need for footwear to be fitted correctly as well as being of designs that are fit for purpose. A number of the issues
raised (particularly "ease of donning and doffing", "individualizing", "style" "change/choice of footwear") and several of the comments reported by participants are also matters directly concerning fit. Please could the authors therefore incorporate comments within the discussion on the need for correct shoe fitting in addition to considerations of design.

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Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article of importance in its field

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

Acceptable

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As a Council Member Society of Shoe Fitters I have received expenses from them (travel, overnight accommodation). Publication of this manuscript could raise awareness of shoe fitting which could benefit their members and the society through raised interest in shoe fitting/education.

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