Reviewer’s report

Title: Reducing shoulder complaints in employees with high occupational shoulder exposures: study protocol for a cluster-randomised controlled study (The Shoulder-Café Study)

Version: 0 Date: 29 Jun 2019

Reviewer: Rebecca Meiring

Reviewer’s report:

This is an interesting and well-thought out intervention. The authors aim to determine the effect of a novel and comprehensive café based exercise intervention on the reduction in shoulder complaints and occupational shoulder exposures compared to an active usual care group. My main concern is the possibility that both groups may improve in outcomes and due to the nature of the intensity of the interventions it is difficult to determine the exercise effects from the behaviour modification and education however the authors have addressed this limitation in their discussion.

I have some minor comments below.

Abstract background: Please adjust the sentence "In Denmark, exercise therapy in combination with work modifications is the first choice treatment for persons with shoulder complaints and high occupational shoulder exposures" to In Denmark, exercise therapy in combination with work modifications is the first choice treatment for persons with high occupational shoulder exposures and complaints" to make it clear that both complaints and exposures are due to occupational reasons, unless I have misunderstood that the shoulder complaints are general shoulder complaints.

Either in the background or the discussion, please could the authors discuss why the social aspect of a café concept might be better than the usual care other than that it is novel?

Line 98, some background needed on prevalence of fear avoidance beliefs and patient perception of change.

Trial population - Please insert the anticipated sample size here in this paragraph.

Line 163 - is there a minimum number of employees within a company that will need to participate in order for the company to be included?

Level of interest
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article of importance in its field

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Is it essential that this manuscript is seen by an expert statistician? If so, please give your reasons in your report.

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