Review of: "Perceived Social Support as a Predictive Factor of Fatigue and Quality of Life Among Healthcare Professionals in Greece"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

In its current form, this manuscript is a detailed preliminary report about a study of fatigue in relation to demographic variables, social support, and general health. However, it is far away from what could ever be published in a scientific journal. Currently, the aims of the study are far too wide and unspecific.

However, this does not mean that the collected data are without potential for being worked into a scientific paper of interest. There are several ways to pursue this goal. Below, I will briefly outline a suggestion you could follow, but the authors must feel free to look for other solutions.

My sincere suggestion to you is to carry out a multiple hierarchical linear regression analysis in SPSS. Use “Overall fatigue” as the dependent variable. The independent variables can be entered in four groups: First group - demographic variables with sex, age, marital status. Second level - specialty, years of service, work hours per week, responsibility position. Third level GHQ-28 variables - physical sx, anxiety & insomnia, social dysfunction, and depression. Fourth level – social support variables: family, friends, significant others. Use Enter as the method.

Alternatives: Re. Dependent variable: you could run two linear regression analyses, one with physical fatigue and another with mental fatigue as the dependents.

Re. independent variables, you could use the same for both physical and mental.

By this approach, you would see which variables do independently and significantly contribute positively and negatively to fatigue in this population. Also, you will get a much higher total explained variance (R^2). Overlapping will be corrected for.

You seem to have all the necessary raw data but may need some help from a statistician to work out the equations for the multiple hierarchical regression analysis. Many variables are continuous in nature, but some of the demographic variables seem to be categorical. They would have to be recoded into “dummy variables.”

A suggested title for such a paper could be something like: Explaining Fatigue Among Healthcare Professionals in Greece. Or: Fatigue, Mental Health, and Social Support Among Healthcare Professionals in Greece.

COMMENTS TO PRESENT MANUSCRIPT

INTRODUCTION: Instead of taking one study after the other sequentially, you hold together those studies that share one common finding and reference them conjointly. Then you take the next common finding of relevance to the study and reference them conjointly. Like that, you go on until you have covered what seems relevant to present “the state of the art” in this field of studies. All together, 3 to 5 such groupings of common findings could be used in the introduction to the field and your study.

In the present ms., the introduction gets too long. By grouping the common findings one by one, you will need much less space and will end up with a shorter Intro.

You will need to reformulate your Aims of Study.

Your description of your variables (sections A-D) is quite OK.

METHOD: In the method section, you should preferably present the studied population before your description of the measures (A-D); use a separate heading – population, sample, or other. Also, you should briefly outline the procedure for data collection under a separate heading - procedures.

Note that no specific instrument is measuring quality of life. For that reason, I would take that descriptor out of the main title of the paper.

RESULTS: This description is far too detailed for any scientific journal.

Mostly, what you have done now is to analyse two variables together at a time. That gives you many answers, too many, and you do not know if some of them overlap. In the multiple regression analyses, overlaps are automatically corrected for. This gives you the final, most relevant, and significant variables explaining the dependent variable = fatigue.

In table 5, you use Spearman’s correlations. You should use Pearson's correlations instead.

Do not use more than 2 decimals when referring to numbers from the statistical analyses in your tables.

DISCUSSION: First, summarize your main findings.

Thereafter, you should discuss them in relation to the findings of others.

Always include toward the end of the Discussion a section on the limitations of the study.

Never include new data in the Discussion; you have included three tables. They must be taken out. Instead of new data, you should write your interpretations of the findings you have made. What do your findings mean? That is what you should write.

In broad strokes, these are my suggestions for a revision and my comments on the version that I just read. Your collected data has absolutely potential, so keep up your work to get this published eventually.

Wishing you the best of luck!