

Author's response to reviews

Title: Mortality and life expectancy of professional fire fighters in Hamburg, Germany: A cohort study 1950 - 2000

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Version: 3 **Date:** 29 August 2006

Author's response to reviews: see over

Dear Dr. Grandjean,

this is the revised version of our manuscript. We attempted to follow all your recommendations regarding the additional analyses of the impact of “time since first employment” on the healthy worker effect. Basically we performed an additional SMR-analysis by simultaneously including “time since first employment” and “duration of employment”. The results are included in a new table 6 and discussed in the discussion section.

The details to your comments included in the text: (we removed the original comments from the text due to formatting purposes)

[0]Please move to Methods section **Done**

[0]First sentence should be something like... The healthy worker effect may hide adverse health effects in hazardous jobs, especially those where physical fitness is required. **Done**

[0]Please move to Methods section **Done**

[0]Do you mean ‘seniority’? Please add ‘time from first employment’ **Done**

[0]Please add a sentence to put this study in perspective in regard to the healthy worker effect. **Done**

[0]Please explain why cause of death could not be obtained **Done**

[0]Please describe the predictors that were used **Done**

[0]Please add stratification by seniority and time since first employment **new table 6**

[0]This section should be supplemented by a section, where you present data on ‘Time from first employment’, where the retirees are included. see the preceding paragraph **Done**

[0]You need to discuss the healthy worker effect. In some populations, this effect appears to disappear with time (provided that retirees are not excluded). This issue may demand a separate paragraph. **See new paragraph on p 13**

[0]This table – or a separate table - should also show the effect of time since first employment, perhaps also seniority **see new table 6**

[0]Please show how the multivariate analysis is affected if you include ‘time since first employment’ rather than ‘duration of employment’ (= seniority) **An inclusion of ‘time since first employment’ into multivariate analysis was not feasible, because this variable was the underlying time variable in the Cox-model. Instead, the interaction between it and duration of employment is analyzed by SMR in table 6**