

#### General comments:

The manuscript has been significantly improved, in general agreement with the reviewers' recommendations. In general, the authors have responded to my questions quite well. The results in the revised version are now presented in (much) more details and discussed thoroughly and properly, in light of the pre-existing literature. The title has been changed according to a reviewer remark and is now in much better alignment with the scientific content of the paper. I think the paper warrants publication now, but I would however make a few final and minor technical suggestions (see below).

#### Technical comments:

1. P7, L7 and elsewhere: in many instances "begin" is employed as a noun. I'm not a native English speaker but I think "begin" is a verb and "beginning" is the noun you actually want to use. If you agree please correct accordingly.
2. P9, L29 and elsewhere: Prefer  $10^{-3}$  N to mN.
3. P9, L31: remove "was"

Regarding the length of the revised version, I think the abstract is a bit short and could contain more of the main and interesting results of the paper. I tried to list them below

- The SMP hardness increases after the main drifting snow event are significantly higher than anything achieved in the wind tunnel. most likely due to higher wind speeds and more intense drifting snow causing more compaction and hardening in the natural environment.
- Time and sintering are not the dominating processes in wind-packing, in agreement with previous wind tunnel experiments but in disagreement with previous literature, but the measured hardness variability could not be adequately explained with the available data.
- The field data exhibits a low correlation between the wind exposure  $S_x$  and the SMP hardness change, but simultaneous measurements of the hardness and  $S_x$  are needed for a direct comparison with the wind tunnel experiments
- The wind exposure, wind speed and drifting intensity at the moment of deposition are probably more important than the age of the deposition to explain the measured variability of the hardness