Reviewer's report

**Title:** The experience of college students with pulmonary tuberculosis in Shaanxi, China: a qualitative study

**Version:** 5  **Date:** 26 April 2010

**Reviewer:** Rachel Tolhurst

**Reviewer's report:**

This paper has substantially improved since its last iteration and the majority of my previous major compulsory revisions have been addressed. However, I have a couple of remaining concerns that still require addressing before the paper is suitable for publication, in my view.

**Major compulsory revisions:**

1) I am still not clear enough on the distinctions between the main themes under the overarching theme of 'influence on mental health'. Chiefly, I still do not feel that 'fear', 'anxiety' and 'worry' are sufficiently clearly distinguished from each other. Reading the text of these themes it seems that the main distinction is the stage of the disease or treatment process to which the emotional states relate. If this is so, then the themes need clearer labelling to reflect this, e.g. 'Worry about future health and prospects' or 'anxiety about the nature of illness'. Perhaps a diagrammatic representation of how these relate to external conditions may help? (the diagram is not compulsory).

2) Related to this we still learn very little about what is known in the international literature about the psychological impacts of TB. Three international studies are referenced in the background, but summed up in one sentence. Only one international study is referenced in the discussion and it is not altogether clear what point is being made about this study in relation to the one under discussion. Can the authors say a little more about the key psychological impacts identified (and possibly their relation to external conditions) and whether, or how, the study adds to our understanding of these?

**Minor essential revisions:**

1) The description of the criteria used in purposive sampling is much improved, but I have a feeling that some of the terms need revisiting. For example 'educational background' should probably be changed to 'type of degree' and 'grade' should probably be changed to 'cohort' or 'year of study' to make it easier to understand.

2) The English expression has much improved, but a further English edit may be needed to get the English up to a publishable standard.

3) The attribution of quotes is much improved but some attention needs to be paid to consistency of formatting - e.g. some are in italics and others not.
4) In general the term misconception is now used instead of 'wrong' perceptions, but term 'wrong traditional viewpoint' has crept into the discussion (page 14) and should be changed.

5) The TB policy situation is much better explained, but requires slightly more clarification on page 4 (second to last sentence) where it should be made clear that referrals to TB hospitals mean that the patients are not covered under the free treatment policy.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests'