Reviewer’s report

Title: Predictors of persistently positive Mycobacterium-tuberculosis-specific interferon-gamma responses in the serial testing of health care workers

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Reviewer: Marion GRARE

Reviewer’s report:

It’s an interesting study. One of the interests of this study is that it has been prospectively conducted. The major limitations are the low number of included subjects, and of positive QFT-GIT results observed. I have some questions and remarks for authors.

1) Material&Methods
“after limited exposure to culture-confirmed TB source cases”

Are all the source cases smear positive? Apparently, not. But have you observed an influence of the type of source case (smear positive or not) on the TST/IGRA result at baseline, and the IGRA result at follow up? And an influence of the exposure time?

Was the IGRA realized before or after the TST? On the same arm?

2) Results

• Study population

Figure 1 clearly explains the design of the study, and is very informative.

• Prior and baseline TST results
“129 had been tested with a prior TST, in median 5 years ago (range 3 months to 38 years)”

Have you evaluated the influence of a prior TST result on QFT-GIT result at baseline?

• QFT-GIT results and agreement with recent TST results

The frequency of indeterminate results is low compared to previously published studies. It’s very interesting. How do you explain that?

• Frequency of inconsistent QFT-GIT results

In the Table 3, the patients who presented inconsistent QFT-GIT results are clearly presented. The Figure 3 is useless and brings not supplementary information compared to Table 3. This figure should be suppressed.

3) Discussion and conclusions

The discussion and conclusions are well-balanced, and based on previously published studies.

The literature data cited in the manuscript are recent; and the studies cited are
clearly in the field of the presented work. It’s a very good job which perfectly underlined the lack of data concerning the IGRAs in the follow up of health care workers.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**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