Title: Infection control and the burden of tuberculosis infection and disease in health care workers in China: A cross-sectional study

Version: 1 Date: 1 August 2010

Reviewer: Ashwin Dharmadhikari

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

None

Minor Essential Revisions

1. It would be important to report how many HCW were eligible for the study, but did not consent to participate or were not available to participate. In addition, if the authors have any information, or hypotheses, about the reasons for non-participation among the non-participants, this too would be important to include and discuss. For example, in paragraph 1 of the section called “LTBI prevalence” the authors note that the TST was employed in 2153 (94.1%) of 2288 HCW in the 58 selected TB centers. Any explanations or speculation about the 6% on whom TST was not employed? This information will help the reader understand whether the data presented in this manuscript reflect information pertinent to the entire population of HCW, or just a subset that agreed to participate in the study. It will also help support the extent to which these data are generalizable to HCW in China.

2. Table 2 (and the manuscript text referring to Table 2): The authors must tell the readers the variables for which the crude ORs were adjusted to arrive at the “Adjusted OR” for each analysis. Otherwise, we as readers do not know what the adjusted ORs represent.

3. Introduction, Paragraph 2: The authors state that “Health care facilities in China do not routinely perform tuberculin skin tests (TST) on HCW because endemic TB transmission and cross-reactivity with BCG after vaccination might lead to non-specific reactions to TST”. The way this is written, it suggests that endemic TB transmission might lead to non-specific reactions to TST. In fact, endemic TB transmission would not result in non-specific TST reactions, but may reflect actual TB infection. The sentence should be reworded to convey the point, which I presume the authors wish to make, that health care facilities in China are not doing TSTs on HCW because endemic TB transmission may reduce the utility of using the TST as a marker of nosocomial TB transmission.

Discretionary Revisions

1. Table 2: Authors should also mention in the label for Table 2 that this table
includes the basic demographic data on their HCW cohort. In addition, it would also be great to put a sentence in the text of the manuscript about the demographics (average age, gender breakdown, etc.) of the HCW cohort.

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

**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.