Reviewer’s report

Title: The Burden and Treatment of HIV in Tuberculosis Patients In Papua Province, Indonesia: A Prospective Observational Study

Version: 2 Date: 7 November 2010

Reviewer: marina tadolini

Reviewer’s report:

Authors’ aims were to describe current TB-HIV epidemiology and management in Timika, Papua Province, Indonesia, in order to tailor future interventions. Specifically, they aimed to investigate the burden of HIV infection among adults with smear-positive pulmonary TB, to examine changes over time, to describe current HIV management and compare with 2009 WHO guidelines, and investigate TB treatment outcomes among TB-HIV co-infected people. The study was conducted between June 2008 and October 2009. Among 162 smear-positive pulmonary TB patients recruited, 141 (87.0%) were offered VCT and HIV status was determined in 138 (85.2%), of whom 18 (13.0%) were found HIV+. Indigenous Papuans were significantly more likely to be HIV+ than Non-Papuans. HIV prevalence among people with TB was significantly higher than during a 2003-4 survey at the same TB clinic, and substantially higher than the Indonesian national estimate of 3%. Only six people had CD4+ T-cell counts recorded, 11 were prescribed co-trimoxazole and 4 received ART before, during or after TB treatment, despite ART being indicated in 14 according to 2009 WHO guidelines.

Comments:

MINOR ESSENTIAL REVISIONS

1. The very limited access to CD4 measurement and ART for co-infected patients is a serious matter of concern and should be further explained; the cotrimoxazol preventive therapy (CPT) uptake is not described, despite representing one of the key point interventions in the TB/HIV co-management. It should be included in the results and discussion.

2. The paper mainly focuses on the burden of HIV infection in new TB patients in Papua Province, while the treatment of coinfected is poorly described due to the limited access to treatment of co-infected patients. The title (The Burden and Treatment of HIV in Tuberculosis Patients In Papua Province, Indonesia: A Prospective Observational Study) should be revised accordingly.

DISCRETIONARY REVISIONS

3. The reason why only 141 TB patients were offered HIV test among 162 recruited should be further explained.

4. The reason why pregnant women were excluded by the study should be further explained.
5. The social context of Papua Province should be more elaborated, in order to better understand the results obtained concerning ethnicity (Indigenous Papuan or Non-Papuan). The proportion of indigenous/non-Papuan in the general population of the province should be included.

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests