Reviewer’s report

Title: The QuantiFERON-TB Gold test in the diagnosis and treatment of latent tuberculosis in patients from a Norwegian outpatient clinic

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Reviewer: Robert Wallis

Reviewer’s report:

This study describes the experience of a Norwegian outpatient clinic in use of the QFN assay in evaluation and treatment of LTBI. The main findings were that the proportion of patients with positive tests was relatively low, with the main factors for positivity being in some way related to TB endemic countries, and that only a small proportion of treated patients converted to a negative test after treatment. Although the 1st and 2nd observation cover familiar and fairly well established territory, the issue of conversion due to treatment remains an area of active research. The number of patients converting to negative may be too small for analysis; however, it would be of interest if this were possible, as other studies appear to indicate that long duration of LTBI decreases the likelihood of conversion to negative.

The main shortcoming of the manuscript is the multiple regression analysis, which I found confusing. For example, origin in a TB endemic country appears to be the strongest single factor in the univariate analysis, but in the multivariate analysis this is replaced by previous TB and parents from a TB endemic country without having traveled there. Although I am not a statistician, my understanding is that there are several approaches to such an analysis, and that they can sometimes lead to very different conclusions. I am not certain how robust the conclusions of this analysis might be.

Lastly, I think the manuscript is rather lengthy given the modest amount of new data presented.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I have no competing interests