Reviewer's report

Title: Delays in starting antiretroviral therapy in patients with HIV-associated tuberculosis accessing non-integrated clinical services in a South African township

Version: 1 Date: 13 July 2011

Reviewer: Kevin Rebe

Reviewer's report:

This article is interesting, well written and relevant. There are no major or minor revisions required. The paper is easily read and the research question being addressed is clear.

Discretionary revisions:

1. I am not certain when the start of the delay period between TB and ART began. Was the start point the date of TB diagnosis, the date of TB treatment initiation or the date of TB notification as there are often significant time differences between these?

2. Regarding patients in who did not start ART due to deferment, what were the reasons for deferment? This is of relevance because the article points out structural barriers to achieving rapid ART initiation in TB co-infected patients. Some of the delay might not have been due to structural barriers but rather due to clinical contra-indications to initiating ART.

3. Lastly, it would be interesting to know if there was a mortality / morbidity difference between patients who's TB was diagnosed at separate TB clinics compared to those with TB diagnosed at the integrated clinic. From the data reported here, one would expect a difference based on review of the literature but it is unclear if this was observed in the cohort described.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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