Reviewer’s report

Title: Factors associated with patient and health care system delay in diagnosis for tuberculosis in the province of Luanda, Angola

Version: 2 Date: 15 November 2012

Reviewer: Fekadu Abebe

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MS: factors associated with patient and healthcare system delay in diagnosis for tuberculosis in the province of Luanda, Angola

By Lusignani et al.

Major compulsory revisions

Abstract:
1. Under methods, line 6, it reads “structured questionnaire were randomly administered to a cohort of TB patients” but on page 4 study design, “we performed a cross-sectional study during a three-month period from April to June 2008”. The authors should need to rewrite their study design both in the abstract and materials and methods.

2. Under abstract Line 8, the authors state, “univariate and multivariate analysis were performed. Logistic regression analysis was applied to analyze risk factors of delays”. The authors need to clearly state which statistical method was used for what.

Introduction

3. “Introduction” may change to “background” to follow BMC format

4. Paragraph 2, line 2 “it is estimated that every year there are 9.4 million----tuberculosis (4). It is not clear whether this figure is global or for Angola?

Methodology

5. The authors may need to give the rationale for excluding DOTS centers with less than 100 TB patients

6. The authors are required to give inclusion and exclusion criteria used for selecting their TB patients, and more importantly how the study participants were selected, instead of giving a 1967 book reference?

7. The authors need to show questions used to measure patients’ knowledge of TB and how the results were analyzed

8. The authors are required to describe how they assessed perception levels and the quality of health services at the DOTS center?

9. The authors are required to give a brief description (e.g. distance from each other, setting, etc.) of the 21 DOTS center selected.
Results

10. “socio-economic characteristics of the study sample” may be replaced by “socio-economic characteristics of the study participants”

11. Although patient delay and health systems delay have been defined differently, the variables used to assess both patient delay and health system delay are the same. For instance, it is not clear how factors such as high volume of DOTS centers, density of inhabitants/health care workers, waiting time at the center, and center of first contact on patients delay will affect patient delay. Similarly it is not clear how factors such as sex, education, income, residence, occupation, distance, transport method, knowledge of TB affect health systems delay

Discussion:

12. The discussion is generally poor and should be rewritten (please see examples below)

a. Line 1-3 will not add to the quality of your discussion. If there is no standard definition of “patient” or health systems delay”, how did you chose your own definition?

b. Page 8, paragraph 2, line 6-13 should clearly state how education influences delay in angola and elsewhere

c. Page 9, paragraph 2, lines should be clearly discussed or removed

d. System delay, paragraph 2 is not relevant to delay and should be removed/replaced

Conclusion

What has been described as conclusion is limitation of the study. The two should be given separately and clearly

References

Check references (e.g. is reference no 19 Yemane T or Yemani T?)

Figures and tables

Tables 3, 4, and 5 should be removed and results can be summarized in the text

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I have no competing interest