Reviewer's report

Title: Comparison of Xpert MTB/RIF with ProbeTec ET DTB and COBAS TaqMan MTB for direct detection of M. tuberculosis complex in respiratory specimens

Version: 1 Date: 11 March 2013

Reviewer: Mark Pandori

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions
None

Minor Essential Revisions
None.

Discretionary Revisions

1. Can the authors comment on why the selection of MTBC positive specimens used in this study was significantly biased to smear negative and "scanty" grade specimens? I don't think it affects the quality of the study, but it is notable.

2. The written English of the manuscript, while of mostly high quality, is rough in isolated parts of the manuscript:

   - line 4 of the Background ("..value of such tests likes in its greater positive...")
   - line 14 of NAAT section: what is a "special oven"?
   - line 41 of the Discussion ("...study where- except some weak...")

3. The comment in the Discussion on the DTB being more sensitive because of a multicycop target ignores that DTB uses SDA which is a different mechanism than PCR. It is possible also that differences between SDA and PCR were the cause of their performance differential.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:
I have no competing interests.