Reviewer's report

Title: Treatment outcomes from community-based drug resistant tuberculosis treatment programs: a systematic review and meta-analysis

Version: 1 Date: 28 September 2013

Reviewer: Adrian Gardner

Reviewer's report:

- Major Compulsory Revisions
  None
- Minor Essential Revisions

Background:
1. Paragraph 2, Sentence 2: The tenses are a bit confusing and inconsistent
2. Paragraph 3, Sentence 2: The description of cb-DOTS excludes local health care workers as treatment observers though later in the paper, the authors refer to HCWs and their role in cb-MDR programs

Selection of Studies:
1. Sentence 1: There seem to be a few words missing…. “Examined for eligibility beginning with the abstract, and followed by full text review”

Treatment Outcome Definitions:
1. Sentence 2: Missing words. “Patients that met criteria for….were classified as having unsuccessful treatment outcomes”

Study Characteristics:
1. Did the authors examine the impact of program “maturity” (ie number of years in practice)? One wonders if this may impact patient outcomes
2. Sentence 2: It may be worth noting that you are referring to the HIV prevalence among the cohort described, not the HIV prevalence in the geographic area.

Discussion:
1. Paragraph 2, Sentence 2: “report” should be changed to “reported”
2. Paragraph 5: It may be worth mentioning the impact of novel POC diagnostics for DR-TB and how they may also impact the “decentralization” of MDR care and complement cb-MDR programs and their impact on waiting times, transmission dynamics, etc.
3. Paragraph 6: It may be worth commenting on the “maturity” of the program (ie number of years in practice) as this may be a relevant factor that affects patient
outcome
4. It would be worth noting more explicitly the limitations of the analysis, particularly the limited sample size in some of the sub-group analyses.

Table 1:
1. It is not clear what the asterisk next to Study Type refers to. It may be worth defining PC and RC and prospective and retrospective.
2. What is the purpose of the “* Resistance for MDR, XDR TB” at the bottom of the table?

Table 3:
1. The title could be “Patient Treatment Outcomes”
2. The “Summary” line is a little confusing. Can the 129 be labeled as the mean sample size?

- Discretionary Revisions
None.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

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

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I am a co-author on one of the articles utilized in this meta-analysis, but I have no competing interests with regards to this analysis.