Reviewer's report

Title: Influence of environmental exposure on response to antimicrobial treatment in pulmonary Mycobacterial avium complex disease

Version: 1 Date: 31 March 2014

Reviewer: Julie Philley

Reviewer's report:

This is a relevant article related to environmental exposure and antimicrobial treatment. I feel it adds some additional perspective to available environmental data related to NTM and appreciated the work of the authors. It is well written. I have no major revisions to suggest.

Minor revisions

1. Page 5, lines 58. better wording may read "A prospective, randomized, controlled study revealed a better microbiological response"

2. It would be helpful to further understand high vs low soil exposure. (Ex. number of farmers vs gardeners? what type of soil used and what activities? rural vs suburban patients).

3. It may be helpful for the authors to comment on species identification (M. avium vs M. Intracellulare) and the clinical significance (or lack thereof) related to environmental exposure and treatment response.

4. Did the authors only suggest complete avoidance of soil exposure to patients in 2010? (Did they use masks?, etc)

5. The authors did comment on the major limitation of not analyzing genotypes from relapsed patients. Clinically, the fingerprinting of isolates is essential information regarding soil exposure.

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 declare that I have no competing interests.