Reviewer’s report

Title: TB incidence and characteristics in the remote gulf province of Papua New Guinea: a prospective study.

Version: 1 Date: 23 November 2013

Reviewer: Daniel O’Brien

Reviewer’s report:

This paper describes a well designed and conducted study that provides important new information describing the high TB incidence and prevalence in rural and remote PNG, and the likely emergence of significant multi-drug resistant disease. It also provides an important insight into the prevalence of HIV in these areas. This is useful information that can help health care providers in these settings and may lead to increased efforts to improve the access to quality diagnosis, treatment and care for tuberculosis in PNG, especially in the many remote areas of the country.

Minor essential revisions
1. “Only 24 of 83 cases (29%) that were discharged from hospital, with TB therapy, attended any follow-up appointment” – why were the 59 cases who did not attend these appointments not classified as defaulters?
2. It is possible that patients were more likely than normal to present to the hospital due the presence of the study and study doctors and an expectation that better treatment would have been available than was usually the case. This may have led to an overestimation of the TB incidence, and this should be acknowledged in the discussion of the incidence estimates.

Discretionary revisions
1. Suggest make treatment follow-up a separate section from TB clinical manifestations

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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