**Reviewer’s report**

**Title:** Prevalence of tuberculosis drug resistance in 10 provinces of China

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**Reviewer:** Robert Loddenkemper

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Review für BioMed Central

Prevalence of tuberculosis drug resistance in 10 provinces of China

The paper reports on the results of drug resistance surveys in 10 provinces of China from 1996 to 2004. Altogether, about 14,000 isolates were tested, 11,000 from new TB cases.

Among new cases, the MDR-TB rate was 5.4 % (9.3 % in the abstract is wrong!), and 25.6 % for previously treated cases.

A random sample (11.6 %) were re-tested by the national reference laboratory, and the conclusion is drawn that the quality of susceptibility testing is quite good, although it still needs improvement.

It would be of interest to know the trend of the number of examinations during the years between 1996 to 2004 and the development of the MDR rate during this time.

Under ‘Methods’ and ‘Laboratory quality control’ it is stated that re-testing by the national reference laboratory of China was done since 2002. Does this mean that the re-testing was only done between 2002 and 2004, or was it done before by the SRL in Korea/Hong Kong?

On page 10, it is mentioned that re-interviews of patients were performed in order to avoid misclassification of previously treated cases as new cases. However, this was done only in two provinces and reduced the prevalence of MDR among new TB cases from 16 % to 11 % and 10 % to 8 %, respectively. What about the other eight provinces?

The paper underlines the need to improve the national TB programme in China, which on average has quite high MDR-TB levels.

**Minor points:**

In the first paragraph of the introduction, it is mentioned that almost 425,000 cases of MDR-TB are estimated to emerge worldwide every year.

Reference 1 gives a number of 489,135 cases.

In paragraph 2, brackets have to be added at the end of the first sentence.