Reviewer's report

Title: Genotyping and Drug resistance patterns of M. tuberculosis strains in Pakistan

Version: 1 Date: 25 January 2008

Reviewer: Stefan Niemann

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions:

1. The authors used spoligotyping as a typing method. This has not a sufficient discriminatory power as can be seen in the high cluster rate. Hence, a cluster analysis can not really be performed and the presentation of the data in this way makes no sense. The authors should use the terminology shared types and orphan types instead of clustered and not clustered. The classification of the strains should first be done according to major genotypes/phylogenetic lineages which are then further divided. It makes no sense to draw special attention to small subgroups e.g. CAS1 which belong to a larger principle Clade. The authors should follow a strict classification scheme form larger genetic groups to shared or single types observed in Pakistan. The nomenclature in all tables should be changed accordingly.

2. The MDR rate reported in the study is strikingly high. This needs further classification and reasons and implications should be discussed in detail. The author should present patient classification according to WHO case definition and detailed drug resistance data in an overview table with. This is necessary for a meaningful interpretation of these striking data.

3. Overall, several parts of the paper e.g. the introduction appear very long and redundant and can be shortened significantly.

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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

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