Reviewer's report

Title: Comparison of pulmonary and extrapulmonary tuberculosis in Nepal - a hospital-based retrospective case-series analysis

Version: 1 Date: 30 August 2007

Reviewer: Veeranoot Nissapatorn

Reviewer's report:

General

This manuscript is generally interesting in terms of epidemiology and related issues of TB (public health), particularly in an area where high burden of TB has been identified with limited published information.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Introduction

This part should be more of a literature review (as shown here were recent studies) on TB and both subtypes (PTB and EPTB). However, the authors seem to be more focused on EPTB than PTB (according to the objectives), as very clearly shown in the 1st and 2nd paragraphs. I would recommend the authors to rewrite and readjust the contents with a clear cut paragraph. Some of these references should be more cited in the discussion.

Avoid repeating the sentence, term or phrase such as vary according to, host-related factors, etc. - summarize and group as one

Third paragraph: line 7-9; Risk factors...are lacking - revise and combine

It would be better to combine these two objectives as one sentence.

Materials and Methods:

Study setting: The authors can elaborate a bit more on general information in term of size of population and the incidence of TB (PTB and/or EPTB in this setting, etc.

Line 5-7 - combine (both are referred to TB Dx)

Line 9, according to NTP guideline à any references.

Data collection:

All TB patients - How many?

Any inclusion criteria for this study
How long for the duration of the patients who was having these co-morbid diseases and use of immunosuppressive drugs.

Classification of PTB and EPTB patients
Page 7, line 3, …pleura… - PTB
Page 8, line 4, …pleura… - EPTB

How did you differentiate these two conditions with the same organ involvement?

Result
Table 1. From the text part, the subtopics were chronologically divided therefore it would be better if the authors make a similar pattern in the Table as well.

Characteristics PTB EPTB p-value
Demographic factors
Life style factors
Clinical profiles/factors

History of contact - ?
Use of immunosuppressive drug - refer to Materials and Methods.

1. Demographic factors
The last 2 lines of paragraph
at younger ages - be specific
a bimodal pattern - clarify

2. Life style factors
“ever smoked” - clarify (If any term that has not been used/mentioned in your previous text, give a kind of “definition” or “a short meaning” which is correlated with your data).

3. Clinical profiles
Line 7-11 - revise (it is not clear what the authors try to tell the readers related to TB/HIV in this study and I also see in the Discussion (page 13, line 1-4).

Note: I would suggest that the authors should write in detail (eg., percentage) of 1, 2 and 3.

Multivariate comparison
Line 3; lower age - younger age

Discussion:
I would suggest that the authors should group the titles for discussion by following the “Result” (there were too many paragraphs). It will make your discussion more interesting and easier to understand for the readers.

Page 13, 1st paragraph, line 1-6 (1-4 and 4-6) - ?

This paragraph, the authors should revise by comparing with other studies either similar or contrary and giving meaningful/supportive comments/observations or any hypothesis behind these results (It is very clear that line 4-6 just like repeating the result and hanging there with no meaning).

2nd paragraph, Line 12, may be have been - ?

Line 12-13, erroneously diagnosed/over-diagnosis
- misdiagnosis?.

Line 1-2, Earlier studies…13-15, However…. and line 4-6, Recent studies…. In Background)- revise (not keep repeating).

Page 14, 1st paragraph, line 1…aimed to……EPTB - remove (it is better to present their results which may be similar or contradict with the present one and further discuss about “Why” or “Why not”).

Line 2-5 - revise (combine these two sentences… a bit confusing!).

Line 5-7 - revise (What did the authors try to tell? Is it the reason why the incidence of PTB was low, high or ?).

2nd paragraph, line 1-4 - avoid repeating the word “gender differences” and “differential”.

Line 1-3 - combine these two sentences and avoid repeating.


Page 16-17, 2nd and 3rd paragraphs should be combined

3rd paragraph, line 3: in our study…..associated with TB - remove and the authors should highlight/suggest the importance of TB screening in these patients eg., highly suspicion, h/o contact TB, or etc in your setting. This will make this paragraph looks better than just only comparison.

Page 17, 1st paragraph, line 5-6 However……2001.02 [13] - remove and actually
this paragraph is very useful for the authors to emphasize the significant role of TB in HIV/AIDS patients by suggesting TB screening in HIV patients even though the incidence of HIV/AIDS is very low compared to other countries or further study should be highlighted particularly the association between TB (PTB or EPTB)/HIV because the incidence of HIV/AIDS is likely to increase in the future...Who knows?

Reference:

The following references are recommended for correction (refer to original articles);

Ref 2: Tuberculosis: a global..
Ref 12: extra pulmonary - extrapulmonary
Ref 16: socioeconomic - socio-economic

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)