Reviewer's report

Title: Cost-effectiveness analysis of PCR for the rapid diagnosis of pulmonary tuberculosis

Version: 4 Date: 4 July 2009

Reviewer: Stephen Weis

Reviewer's report:

It seems that the point of a major compulsory revision of the article was not understood.

I stated "A weakness of this analysis is that using the results of an "in house" PCR make the results less generalizable to other situations. By definition "in house " PCR are not standardized."

The Perkins article cited in original paper actually makes a statement about in-house PCRs, and I quoted "a recent performance evaluation of six experienced Latin American laboratories showed poor and inconsistent performance of non-commercial polymerase chain reaction assays, casting further doubt on their appropriateness for disease endemic countries use. "

This paper has no paragraph on the limitations of the data. It is essential that this paper have in its discussion the limitations of in-house PCR. They are only as good as the in-house they come from. The authors show good results from their in-house PCR however other experienced laboratories have not been able to duplicate that PCR performance. Lack of standardization is part of the problem of in-house PCR. This limitations need to be clearly stated and discussed in view of inconsistent performance of in house PCR reported by Perkins whom they cite.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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'