Reviewer’s report

Title: T-SPOT.TB responses during treatment of pulmonary tuberculosis

Version: 1 Date: 6 November 2008

Reviewer: Cynthia Bin-Eng Chee

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Major Compulsory Revisions

1. I have concerns regarding the validity of the T-SPOT assay results, as the samples were frozen for as long as 28 weeks (for time 0 samples) prior to the performance of the assays. Where were these assays performed and what were the transportation conditions like? Do the authors have evidence that T-cell reactivity is not diminished by prolonged storage? This could account for the low baseline sensitivity of the T-SPOT (72.4%, vs other published studies which report sensitivities of around 90%) in this cohort of mostly immunocompetent, non-elderly, adult pulmonary TB patients. What was the failure / indeterminate rate at each time point?

Minor Essential Revisions

1. How many sputum TB cultures samples per subject were performed at the 8-week time point?

2. Analysis could also be performed for only subjects with T-SPOT samples available at all three time points to see if the conclusion is any different.

3. Was there any difference in culture conversion at 8 weeks and T-SPOT results between the two treatment regimens?

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I have conducted a study using the T-SPOT assay for monitoring treatment response in pulmonary TB.