Reviewer’s report

**Title:** Screening for Latent Tuberculosis Infection among Undocumented Migrants in Swiss Healthcare Centres; a Descriptive Exploratory Study

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**Reviewer:** Alice Zwerling

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Screening for Latent Tuberculosis Infection among Undocumented Immigrants in Swiss Healthcare Centers: a descriptive exploratory study

This is an interesting manuscript reporting on a pilot study looking at screening undocumented immigrants in Lausanne Switzerland.

Authors consecutively recruited undocumented patients visiting two urban healthcare clinics serving vulnerable populations, and invited them to complete a short TB history questionnaire and give blood for the TSPOT.TB test an Interferon gamma release assay.

Given the main objectives of this research was to provide descriptive statistics like prevalence and compliance, this is a very small sample size and the ‘convenience sample’ may produce biased results. This may be the best that can be done given the hard to reach nature of the population, but this does limit what conclusions can be drawn from the data.

**Major Compulsory Revisions**

It is difficult to assess the potential presence of selection bias with the information provided currently. By using the health clinics as a recruitment point, all participants are assumed to have some reason for visiting medical services. What were typical reasons participants were seeking health care initially? Would these individuals be less healthy than average undocumented immigrants? What about immune suppression conditions or prescription medications? Are these undocumented immigrants similar in other demographic characteristics to other undocumented immigrants in Switzerland (ie: age, SES, etc)?

Given the study limitations stated above coupled with holes in our ability to interpret IGRAs, and understand their predictive abilities, more emphasis should be placed on the limitation that IGRA positivity may not equate perfectly with latent TB infection. As such additionally data using another IGRA or the TST would be helpful. In addition, I would challenge their statement on p7 that “our observations suggest that a reported contact with someone that had TB might not be a valid measure for detecting the infectious state.”; at the very least this statement requires additional justification.

Authors should be careful regarding conclusions such as “the number of patients
that need preventative treatment has been largely reduced.”, and temper their statements with caution.

Discretionary Revisions

It would be very interesting to compare the IGRA results with TST results. Even if the authors did not want to subject the individuals to both TST and IGRA, perhaps they have information on previous TST results (which are known to remain fairly constant over time).

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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