Reviewer's report

Title: Deaths among tuberculosis cases in Shanghai, China: Who is at risk?

Version: 5 Date: 20 May 2009

Reviewer: Christie Jeon

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Discretionary Revisions:

· Thank you for the presentation of a detailed analysis by Cox Proportional Hazards regression and Kaplan-Meier curves, stratifying on TB-associated deaths and non-TB-associated deaths. It seems the proportional hazards assumption is not violated in the KM curves presented, so the Cox regression can validly be used in the analysis. Seeing that there is differential follow-up time, this would have been the preferred method of analysis. At the same time I agree that the conclusions from the Cox regression are similar to that obtained from a logistic regression. So I will defer to the editors and the authors to decide which analysis to present.

· The stratified analyses brings to light what risk factors are associated with non-TB-related deaths and what are associated with TB-related deaths. The differential results could be due to 1) true difference in causes of non-TB-related deaths and TB-related deaths, OR 2) an algorithm for deciding TB-related deaths that depends on the presence/absence of certain risk factors, such comorbidity and MDR TB. If the editor and the authors are of the opinion that the discrepancy is more due to the latter reason, I would agree that stratification is unnecessary.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.