Reviewer’s report

Title: High Prevalence of Pulmonary Tuberculosis in Children Admitted with Severe Pneumonia in Uganda

Version: 2 Date: 25 September 2012

Reviewer: Stephen Graham

Reviewer’s report:

Many thanks for the opportunity to review this interesting and original paper that reports important data.

It is helpful to have clinical data presented in this way. Autopsy data from the region have alerted us to the problem of TB as a cause of severe pneumonia but have not usually provided accompanying clinical data as this study has.

The paper could be better written and would benefit from further editing to reduce repetition and improve clarity for reader.

Major compulsory revisions

none.

Minor Essential revisions

1. Background. line 5 page 1. Pneumonia mortality is not "50%" in Africa - what you mean I think is that in Africa there is 20% of the world's children but African children account for 50% of all child pneumonia deaths globally.

2. Results. It is very unusual to have positive blood culture for M.tb from children. This is a novel finding esp the 5 month old. Was there anything remarkable about these two cases in terms of likelihood of heavy bacillary disease or amount of blood actually taken for culture?

3. Discussion. Too long when comparing to other studies. Note that they were all from South Africa - Zar (3); Moore (16), Madhi (17)and McNally (5) - because availability of culture. Note that McNally may have had a higher TB (and HIV) prevalence but that study had selection bias in that it was a study of severe "treatment failure" cases i.e. those not responding to first-line antibiotics so one might expect a different prevalence of unusual pathogens.

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.