Reviewer's report

Title: Management of pulmonary tuberculosis patients in an urban setting in Zambia: a patient's perspective

Version: 1 Date: 3 September 2010

Reviewer: Akihiro A Ohkado

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Title: Management of pulmonary tuberculosis patients in an urban setting in Zambia: a patient’s perspective

Design: Cross-sectional and descriptive study

Major compulsory revisions:

1. Methods
   (1) Sample size of 105 respondents seems to be relatively small to draw any statistically meaningful results through this kind of cross-sectional study. Authors are requested to explain how did they come up to this sample size under Study design and population part.
   (2) Sampling frame and methods were not clearly described in the text. Authors are requested to describe the sampling frame and how actually did they take samples from the sampling frame under Study design and population part as well. What were the inclusion criteria and the exclusion criteria?
   (3) Regarding “Patient treatment adherence” under Conceptual framework on page 8, this key outcome measurement of this cross-sectional study is fully dependent upon the self-report by the patient him/her-self. Is there any verification mechanism for this key outcome measurement data? For instance, the investigator may have verified the self-reported adherence by checking the medical charts or by asking health centre staff. Authors are requested to describe any verification mechanism for the data self-reported.
   (4) Regarding “Care giver treatment guidelines adherence” on page 8, it is not clear who assesses its adherence. Previous TB patient interviewed or care giver her/him-self?
   (5) Definition of “Treatment delay” is not described under Methods part. Authors are requested to describe explicitly its definition in the text.

2. Results
   (1) The description of the Results throughout need to be further simplified. The contents that the Tables delivers need not describe in the text again. The important findings with direct link to the study objective should be described in the text.
3. Discussion

(1) We can not dilate the results obtained from the present study, which made interview to previous TB patients, as a representative of the people in the community. It is natural that the previous TB patients would have appropriate knowledge about TB, but we can not simply apply this fact to the people in the communities. Authors are requested to rephrase the 2nd and the 3rd sentences of the 2nd paragraph under Discussion part on page 13 to interpret the findings about the knowledge on TB among previous TB patients, not among the people in general.

(2) The 2nd para. discussion has been made comparing the knowledge about TB among general population. It does not make sense to compare the results of the present study on this which looked at the knowledge among previous TB patients with those of other studies which looked at the knowledge among general people. Authors are requested to revise fully the 2nd para under Discussion part to make it consistent.

(3) One sentence from line 10 through 13, and the full 2nd para on page 16 mention about focus group discussions with TB focal persons which does not appear anywhere else in the manuscript. Authors are requested to explain what, when, for what was it held by whom. If it was conducted in the context of the present study, is should appear in Methods and Results parts as well.

Minor essential revisions:

1. Spelling and wording
   (1) “its’” should read as “its” on the 2nd line of the 2nd paragraph on page 4, “diahnosis” should read as diagnosis in reference 11.
   (2) “qualitative factors” may read as “quantitative factors” on the 3rd line of the 3rd paragraph on page 7.
   (3) Full wording is necessary for all of the abbreviated terms when they appear for the first time, for instance, MDR on the 3rd line of the 4th para. on page 7, TFPs on the 7th line on page 18, NDHMT on the 1st line of the 2nd para. on page 19.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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.