Reviewer's report

Title: Determinants of tuberculosis stigma in southern Thailand: a quantitative cross-sectional study of stigma among patients with TB and healthy community members

Version: 1 Date: 5 April 2011

Reviewer: Ludwig Apers

Reviewer's report:

Discretionary revisions

This is a well designed and executed research that addresses a difficult to examine issue in TB management: stigma. the methodology that was applied seems to be well thought through and well elaborated.

Most critical remains however an almost impossible to tackle problem: as participation in a study is voluntary - as ethically required indeed - one may miss the very patients the whole research is about: those ones who feel stigmatised, and who would feel even more stigmatised by participating in this study. This is impossible to avoid, and is recognised by the authors. This however represents a major bias, however elaborated the methodology otherwise may be: results are only based on participants' answers, and the 'really stigmatised', may not have been included.

With regard to this a few questions may be posed: participants who were excluded because of communication problems, may have been illiterate? And hence represent a group with a high chance of feeling stigmatised because of lack of knowledge about TB/HIV?

It is a bit surprising that only 54% of patients participated whilst 100% (?) of community members agreed to participate? Or were the refusals in this group not recorded?

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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'