Author's response to reviews

Title: Unexpected decline in tuberculosis cases coincident with economic recession -- United States, 2009

Authors:

Carla A Winston (cwinston@cdc.gov)
Thomas R Navin (tnavin@cdc.gov)
Jose E Becerra (ibecerra@cdc.gov)
Michael P Chen (mchen1@cdc.gov)
Lori R Armstrong (larmstrong@cdc.gov)
Carla Jeffries (cjeffries@cdc.gov)
Rachel S Yelk Woodruff (rwoodruff@cdc.gov)
Jessie Wing (jwing@cdc.gov)
Angela M Starks (astarks@cdc.gov)
Craig Hales (chales@cdc.gov)
J Steve Kammerer (skammerer@cdc.gov)
William R Mac Kenzie (wmackenzie@cdc.gov)
Kiren Mitruka (kmitruka@cdc.gov)
Mark Miner (mminer@cdc.gov)
Sandy Price (sprice@cdc.gov)
Joseph Scavotto (jscavotto@cdc.gov)
Ann M Cronin (acronin@cdc.gov)
Phillip Griffin (pgriffin@kdheks.gov)
Philip A LoBue (plobue@cdc.gov)
Kenneth G Castro (kcastro@cdc.gov)

Version: 4 Date: 30 August 2011

Author's response to reviews: see over
Thank you for review of our manuscript. Please see below for responses to comments and track changes highlighting updates to previously accepted revisions.

Editor:
"The model fit and description of the specifications of the ARIMA model chosen are essential parts of this study, therefore both should be added in the method section or a publication with this information should be referenced."

We added model fit (Figure 1) and model specifications to the methods (p. 9).
Note: We were considering submitting Figure 1 for manuscript to a statistical journal; however, since no statistical manuscript has yet been completed, we have dedicated this graphic to BMC Public Health.

Reviewer 1: Many thanks to the authors for this revised version in which my comments have been taken into account. I would only suggest a minor discretionary revision consisting to put the first sentence of the discussion at the end of the paragraph as your statement is concluding the findings described in the paragraph.
Respectfully, we have chosen to keep the overriding summary statement as introduction to the paragraph. The key finding of importance to public health is that the 2009 decline in TB cases is real, as supported by multiple lines of evidence.

Reviewer 3:
(1) The data and the model fit are essential parts of the scientific evidence that supports the main conclusion of this manuscript. Please include it in this manuscript, or include a reference to a publication that contains this evidence.
We now include for publication the graphic comparing raw data and model fit previously submitted to the reviewer. Figure 1 highlights that 2009 TB case counts were lower than expected, accounting for seasonal and overall trends since 2000.
(2) Please include the specification of the best fitting ARIMA model in the manuscript, as the central argument depends on the predictions made with this model.
We added explanation p.9 that ARIMA model parameters were (p,d,q)(p,d,q)_{12} for monthly and yearly auto-regressive (p), integrated (d), and moving average (q) parameters, with specification (0,1,1)(0,1,1)_{12} as shown in Figure 1.
(3) Please include a sentence that states that the purpose of table 1 is hypothesis generation rather than assessing the statistical significance of the results.
We modified p. 8 to state that p-values were evaluated for hypothesis generation in conjunction with the magnitude of the deviation and prediction interval bounds.