Reviewer's report

Title: Tuberculosis Disease Severity and Gender are Associated with Reduced Dietary Intake among Adults in Uganda: Cross-sectional Study

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Reviewer: Angeliki Papadaki

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BMC Public Health
Title: Tuberculosis Disease Severity and Gender are Associated with Reduced Dietary Intake among Adults in Uganda: Cross-sectional Study
Authors: Ezekiel Mupere, Isabel M. Parraga, Daniel J. Tisch, Harriet K. Mayanja, and Christopher C. Whalen

This is a paper examining differences in dietary intake between patients at different stages of tuberculosis and with presence or not of HIV. The paper presents novel information, which will be of interest to a wide range of health professionals and is appropriate for BMC Public Health.

Major compulsory revisions:

1. A major comment has to do with your manuscript’s title (and wherever else this might be relevant). The term ‘reduced dietary intake’ is very broad and does not specify your specific findings. For example, an individual can have a reduced dietary intake (thus, reduced in quantity food intake) and still have a high energy intake, if, for example, they consume extremely energy-dense foods. On the other hand, I understand that this is probably unlikely, considering the theme of your manuscript. Nevertheless, please make this issue clearer throughout the manuscript, including the title and abstract, so that your message is more straightforward to readers.

2. In addition, I recommend that you change the word ‘associated/ associations’ throughout the manuscript, since it does not seem that you performed actual association tests, rather you examined differences between different groups (stage of tuberculosis and gender). Your method to analyze your data is correct, however, you did not test for associations.

3. Some minor editing with regards to English language would be needed.

Abstract:

1. If the word count allows, please include information on age of participants, as well as the distribution of genders.
2. Although HIV is a well-known term, it is usual to describe abbreviations in full
the first time they are used. This is also valid for the abstract.

3. Please convert kcals to KJ or MJ (again, it is usual universal journal policy these days). If you like, you can present both KJ and kcal values in both the text and tables, but not only kcals.

4. Please include p values in the results section of the abstract.

5. Is it right that among patients with moderate-to-severe disease, men consumed 3064 kcals per day? It seems like a very high energy intake, particularly for this stage of the disease.

6. Lines 40-41: ‘gender were associated with reduced dietary intake’. Please be more specific and make sure to state that you are examining differences in energy intake etc. between the genders, and not associations.

Methods

1. 1st paragraph (Lines 78-79): ‘One participant was excluded because of prior tuberculosis treatment’. Please describe inclusion/exclusion criteria in detail.

2. Also define number of females/males in your sample.

3. Were all of your patients HIV-positive? If so, this should be clearly identified in your title/abstract as well. You mentioned that HIV advice was provided, but the title indicates that tuberculosis was your main aim. Since you are obviously looking at both tuberculosis and HIV, it might be confusing for some of your readers, so I think clarification is needed.

Discussion

1. It is common practice for the discussion to include a paragraph on study’s limitations, usually just before the final conclusions.

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

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