Reviewer’s report

Title: Tuberculosis lymphadenitis in Southwest Ethiopia: a community based cross sectional study

Version: 1 Date: 26 March 2012

Reviewer: Solomon A Yimer

Reviewer’s report:

General Comment

This study investigated the burden of TB lymphadenitis, an area that has not been explored very much in most high burden countries. I agree with the authors that it is perhaps the first community based study focusing on the prevalence of TB lymphadenitis in rural Ethiopia. The study is very well conducted and will serve as baseline information for future studies. The writing is good even though there are some typological errors that need to be corrected. I suggest authors to address the flowing points in order to improve the manuscript.

Major Compulsory Revisions

Background
1. Many of the abbreviations used are not spelled out the first time they were used in the main text. Please check the entire manuscript and make sure the necessary corrections are made.

Methods
2. Line 75- in relation to selection of study area; were there other justifications for choosing the study site other than being a field research site?
3. Methods, line 82 says “the total number of adults …was 30,040”. Is this number referring to the total permanent eligible population of the “filed research area”?
4. Methods, line 132 - authors claim that “new TB cases identified were immediately referred to the nearby health facility for treatment”. What mechanisms were emplaced to make sure that all those referred patients went to the health center and got treatment?

Results
5. Line 137-138, you mentioned that one kebele was completely removed form the analysis due to incomplete data. I was just wondering to what extent the data were incomplete to result in complete exclusion of that kebele from the analysis?
6. You have not mentioned if there were some households/individuals missed or refused to participate in the study from the other kebeles. Did you have such observations? If so, what were the proportions? You need to clarify these
important points.

7. In table 2 and Table 3, you have not analysed “sex” and “age” together with other variables. Why did you prefer to exclude these variables from the analyses? I think it is important that these variables are also included in the analyses.

8. I could not see the distribution of TB lymphadenitis cases identified in each kebele. Probably another table showing the distribution of cases, including prevalence and confidence intervals per site would be helpful to have more understanding of the epidemiology of the disease in the study area.

9. It would also be important to provide map of the study sites so that readers can have a better picture of the study area.

Discussion

10. Line 164-165 reads “the proportion of extra pulmonary TB among all TB cases varies from country to country”. This invites authors to provide more information. Please give some country specific examples. Also line 167 reads” Ethiopia reports the third highest number of extra pulmonary TB globally”. Please give an appropriate citation for this information.

11. Line 196-201, you discussed that you found more TB lymphadenitis cases among women than men and compared it with other studies “(18-23)”. However, “sex” and age did not show significant difference in the frequency of TB lymphadenitis in your study. I think you need to be cautious when comparing your findings with other studies that reported significant difference. I suggest you consider revising your discussion here.

12. The discussion of your finding, increased risk of TB lymphadenitis among patient with a history of contact with chronic cougher, is placed towards the end of the discussion. As this is one of the most important findings of your study, it should have been discussed further up in the discussion section.

13. With regard to the limitation of the study, you only mentioned about the problem of “delayed culture of samples”. Would there be other limitations to your study apart from the one you mentioned? For example, you have not used PCR in your study which might have helped you pick up some more cases. Could that also be considered as a limitation to your study? What about in terms of generalizability of your study? I think you have some more points to discuss as limitations to your study.

Minor Essential Revisions

Abstract

14. Abstract, lines 1 and 31- “cross sectional”, better to write it as “cross-sectional”.

15. Abstract, line 29- the word “therefore” should be followed by a comma.

16. Abstract, line 35- be consistent in spelling out abbreviations. “AFB” is not spelled out.
17. Background, line 6 - “…total number of TB cases, is about 34%” please remove the comma.

18. Methods, line 74, your listing of Woredas “Sokoru, Omo, Nada, Tiro, Afta and Qars” should be written in Italic.

19. Methods, line 91, I suggest you remove” (MB and AB)”. You do not have to name them as you already have mentioned that FNA was performed by study pathologists.

20. Methods, line 97, you spelled out FNA after it was already used. Please correct that!

21. Methods, line 103- “MB and AB” again mentioned here. Please remove it! It is not necessary.

22. Results, line 143- “On the basis of FNA” should be followed by a comma.

23. Results, line151- “… age group 35-44(99.4 per 100000 people)”. Space and comma are needed i.e. 35-44 (99.4 per 100,000 people).

24. Discussion, line 170- reads “in this study… was established when FNA…” FNA should be followed by a comma.

25. Line 206- 208, reads “This suggests…HIV either Mycobacterial strains…or host factors play an important role…community”. Please add the word “may” between “factor and play.”

26. Line 221, “The strength of our study was that tried it has tried…” Please delete the word tried” as it a repetition of the same word.

27. Table 1, make sure that the title is complete! “100000”, please put comma in between, and add “Gilgel Gibe, south west Ethiopia”

28. Table 1, Third column, is it lymphadenitis or lymphadenopathy? Please make corrections accordingly, also please spell out “OR” and “CI” at the end of the table.

28. Table 1, please close the brackets for confidence intervals for the last 2 categories of age groups.

29. Table 1 please put space between the OR and the brackets where you have the confidence intervals.

30. Table 2, please put space between the figures and brackets where you have the percentages and confidence intervals. Also spell out “COR” “USD” at the end of the table.

31. Table 3, please put space between the figures and brackets where you have the percentages and confidence intervals. Also please close the bracket corresponding to the first category under the variable “number of lymphnodes”, third column.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance 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