Reviewer's report

Title: Tuberculosis diagnosis delays in Chad: a multicenter, hospital-based, survey in Ndjamen and Moundou.

Version: 2 Date: 12 November 2011

Reviewer: Ibrahim Sendagire

Reviewer's report:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
   Yes. The research questions are well defined.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
   a) How were three health facilities selected for your study?
   b) When was the study conducted?
   c) How did you decide on the sample size?
   d) What was the sampling procedure?
   e) Did you take into account the differences in the populations for the different hospitals
   f) The study setting should describe some more details on populations, health facilities, and the referral pattern

3. Are the data sound?
   a) Including a figure to describe the study profile would be helpful in reducing the number words written in the results section

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
   a) Discussion of limitations could be left to the last paragraphs before conclusions

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
   a) Some improvements are required

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
   a) Yes; also see the section on Minor Essential Revisions

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
   No; see Minor Essential Revisions

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
a) Yes: but some improvements needed

9. Is the writing acceptable?
   a) The English needs some improvement: see details in Discretionary Revisions

Details:

Major Compulsory Revisions

10. Page 8; the evidence for the association between the “knowledge about the relation between Aids and TB” and extended HSD is neither given in the table showing multivariable analysis nor in the text

11. The data do not support a huge missed opportunity for HIV testing; best to leave it out of the discussion and conclusions

12. Title could be fine-tuned to reflect delays in “pulmonary tuberculosis” diagnosis

Minor Essential Revisions

12. Are there earlier studies that have been carried out in Chad concerning diagnostic delay; and if so what is the gap in knowledge?

13. Table 3: one variable in the table is described in another language; please translate it to English

14. Limitations of the study:
   a) Are there lower level health facilities in these two cities? If so, are TB diagnostic services decentralized to lower level health facilities?
   b) Page 3: it is stated that a few patients are detected in private practices and then referred to the public hospital. If detecting in this context means diagnosing, then not including private practices would limit the conclusions.
   c) Conclusions of the diagnostic delays could possibly be limited to the public tertiary institutions in Ndjamena and Moundou

Discretionary Revisions

15. To make the article easier to read and comprehend consider the following:
   a) Improvement in the use of some English words
   b) Be consistent with the decimal points you give to the p-values in the text
   c) Page 28; use capital letters for “AIDS” also in other areas in the text
   d) In order get a better feel of the data it would be nice to also show numbers in the various categories in table 2; percentages alone only give half the picture
   e) You may discuss only those factors that were significantly associated with the patient delay in the multivariable analysis to make the manuscript a shorter and more interesting read
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests