Author’s response to reviews

Title: Risk factors for pulmonary tuberculosis in Croatia: a matched case-control study

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Editor,

We have studied the reviewers' comments and we thank them for their constructive criticism which helped us in the preparation of the revised version.

We hope that the presentation of data has been improved and that it will be suitable for the publication in your esteemed Journal. We are willing to make any additional changes if necessary.

Reviewer: Marieke J. van der Werf

Reviewer's report:

Introduction section

The authors describe the current epidemiological situation. Since the study is a historical study using data collected in 2008-2008 they should describe the epidemiological situation in those years.

Brief description of current and past epidemiological situation is added.

Methods section

The authors wrote ‘The idea was to include more than 50% of the Croatian
population’. Since they included 300 controls this does not seem to make sense.

It is written more clear in the manuscript- The idea was to include as many counties as needed to cover more than 50% of the Croatian population and more than 50% of the TB patients registered in the preceding year.

The authors have added a lot of text to the methods section. To me this text does not seem useful in explaining why the authors believe that the cases and the controls came from the same source population. What I now understand is that the controls were selected from the GP registries and the cases from the TB registry. I suggest that the authors provide in a few sentences the information that explains why they consider this the same source population.

It is added in Methods section- Considering that all included TB patients were registered in the GPs’ registers from which the control group was selected, we believe that the cases and the controls came from the same source population.

Discussion section
Since the presented results cover the period 2006-2008 it would be good if the authors explain how the situation has changed (as they did in the introduction) and how this might affect the results.

The explanation is added in Discussion section- These results might be more significant today in terms of unemployment, diabetes and malignant diseases since their burden in Croatia is increasing, while smoking, which is decreasing, might be less relevant as a TB risk factor.

Additional English editing has been done by a native speaker.

Reviewer: Guy Harling
Reviewer’s report:
The reviewers have endeavoured to take all my previous comments into account. I believe that the manuscript is now in publishable form. I note two very minor items.
Minor Revisions:

Background. Paragraph 1. The authors have removed the word ‘European’, making it seem that they do not consider the USA a developed country.

Thank you for this comment. It is corrected.

Background. Paragraph 2. It might not be appropriate to refer to Croatia as ‘we’ in a scientific article.

It is corrected.