Reviewer's report

Title: Latent Tuberculosis Infection in a Malaysian Prison: Implications for a Comprehensive Integrated Control Program in Prisons

Version: 3 Date: 12 November 2013

Reviewer: Bernard Larouze

Reviewer's report:

The new version of this article was significantly improved, but the following points remain to be taken into consideration:

Minor essential revision

- Even if the finding of active tuberculosis cases is not in the scope of their study, the authors should have given the number/% of HIV-seropositive or seronegative inmates with a WHO score>5. In addition to this information, a very short comment on the performance of this score as compared to other screening methods would be of interest, based on previously published evaluations. Prevalence rates of active TB, even if based on smear microscopic examination among “suspects” identified through the WHO score, would have been most valuable information.

Major compulsory revision

- As recommended in our initial review, several paragraphs of the discussion (which, in the revised version, is longer than in the first version) may have been abbreviated, especially in the initial part of the discussion in part dedicated by the authors to “the demonstration that their results are in conformity with results of studies previously published in the medical literature”: the comparison of TST positivity rates observed by the authors in a Malaysian prison with those observed in prisons of other countries (especially in Europe and in the USA) is lengthy; concerning the impact of BCG vaccination on TST positivity, the comment may have been limited to quoting the CDC recommendation... The authors’ recommendations with regard to TB control measures remain very general and are not formulated in operational terms. Passive case finding, inmates and staff education, systematic screening should remain basic measures as unanimously recommended. With respect to IPT, the authors should insist on the difficulty to obtain the adherence of inmates to this prophylaxis and the difficulty of eliminating the diagnosis of active TB before initiating this chemoprophylaxis. In this context of high endemicity for HIV and tuberculosis, technics of Rapid Health Assessment may be considered in order to urgently face this public health emergency.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable
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