Reviewer's report

Title: DOTS improves treatment outcomes and service coverage for tuberculosis in South Ethiopia: a retrospective trend analysis

Version: 1 Date: 29 January 2005

Reviewer: Thomas R Frieden

Reviewer's report:

General

A valuable summary of experience expanding DOTS in one area.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Remove analysis which excludes patients lost to follow up/no record available. These must be assumed to have all defaulted per standard international cohort analysis.

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Correct grammar, including no "the" before DOTS, extra commas, etc.

The fact that 94% of the registrants were new suggests either that there was no anti-TB treatment in the area before, or that there was misclassification of previously treated patients as new. Please comment on this briefly in discussion.

Page 9 fix the rate, which can't be 1.5 if 71% vs 63%.

Results and discussion should be shortened.

Page 14 there are 2 sentences which require revision. "Increased coverage by SCC alone cannot explain the improvement in treatment outcomes." This is not supported by the text and it's not even clear what you are trying to say.

And "We believe that this is a reflection of gender differentials in access...." Your beliefs should not be part of a manuscript. You can say, "This may reflect gender differentials...." Incidentally, it quite possibly doesn't, as indicated by the references for the next sentence.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after discretionary revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

No competing interests.