Author's response to reviews

Title: Pulmonary Tuberculosis among Women with Cough Attending Clinics for Family Planning and Maternal and Child Health in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania.

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Version: 4 Date: 21 July 2009

Author's response to reviews:

17th July 2009

Dear Editor, BMC

Thank you for the comments from reviewers on our article entitled “Pulmonary Tuberculosis among Women Attending Clinics for Family Planning and Maternal and Child Health in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania”, with reference number MS 2173318332504143. We have reviewed the article and incorporated all comments raised by the reviewers. I am glad to re-submit it for possible publication.

Find the attached reviewed manuscript as recommended by reviewers as well as the document which narrate what and where exactly the changes have been made. The highlighted red in the manuscript are the places where the changes have been made.

Thank you in advance,

With best regards
Esther Ngadaya
Corresponding author

RESPONSE TO REVIEWER'S REPORT

Version: 3 Date: 2 July 2009

Reviewer: Gunnar Aksel Bjune

Reviewer's report: the authors have followed all the recommendations given in Dr. Ekkehardt's report. However, the failure of the totals to add up to 749 in Table 1, now well explained in the covering letter (but not in the manuscript) expose a
limitation that should be discussed together with the other limitations.

Response: Reason for the total not to add up to 749 is now explained below table 1.

Reviewers comment: Dr. Ekkehardt's comment about a missing control group is not clear to me, and is not discussed by the authors.

Response: Including a historical comparison group that is patients coughed for less that two weeks but not screened could help to estimates number of cases that could have been missed before the study. However, because of poor record keeping in our facility setting we were not able to use retrospective approach to collect information in this group. Nevertheless it is not clear how this could have influenced our finding and that is the reason we did not discuss it.

Reviewers comment: Smear negative is labeled as non TB in this study, but I can not see that the other examinations that are applied to exclude TB in patients with TB symptoms but with negative smears are done. This group should thus be labeled "smear negative" only.

Response: We agreed with the reviewer we overlooked this. We have revised and labeled it as smear negative patients.

Reviewers comment: Since this is a cross sectional study without a control group, it does not give meaning to talk about "risk factors". The authors should use "association" instead and be more careful in their conclusion when lack of significance in testing for an association is based on small numbers.

Response: In cross sectional studies we can calculate ODD RATIOs that can be used to grossly estimate risks. Sub groups within cross sectional study could be compared and ODD RATIOs calculated. However, precise risk estimation is done by relative risk in cohort study design. Nevertheless, this does not prevent from discussing risk established basing on ODD RATIOS. We agree that care should be taken when lack of significance in testing for an association is based on small numbers.

Reviewer's report

Version: 3 Date: 28 May 2009

Reviewer: Marieke J. van der Werf

Reviewer's report:

Reviewers comment: The authors have addressed most points raised in my review of their paper. They now provide a clear objective and the results and conclusion are related to the objective. However, the title suggests that the authors study Pulmonary Tuberculosis among Women Attending Clinics for Family Planning and Maternal and Child Health. This is not what they study! They only study women who cough and not all women. They study would be more useful if they add information to the results section about how many women
were screened, how many of those that were screened had cough and how many of those that were screened had smear positive TB. If this information is added the title would be accurate.

Response: We agreed with the reviewer’s comments. We have modified the title to reflect women with cough attending FP and MCH clinics.

Reviewers comment: The remark about the sample size calculation has not yet been appropriately addressed. The authors provide some of the assumptions used for the sample size calculation. However, for the reader to be able to repeat the calculation they should also provide the margin of error and the confidence interval used.

Response: Other ingredients for the sample size calculation has been given as reflected in the manuscript under sample size calculation.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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

Response: English correction has been done.

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.