Reviewer's report

Title: Direct and indirect costs of tuberculosis among immigrant patients in the Netherlands

Version: 1 Date: 17 February 2009

Reviewer: Sukhan Jackson

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Major compulsory revision
(1) I found the Conclusion to be rather weak and should be improved It is not surprising that TB patients do have extra expenditures, as do patients of other illnesses.

But what is the implication of the additional TB costs corresponding to 3% of annual income? - 49% of your TB patients found no change in income (Table 2). Perhaps the authors need to put their findings into some perspective, it seems that TB patients in the Netherlands are better off than those in developing countries. There are significant additional costs for TB patients in developing countries, even in China where medication and treatment costs of TB patients are provided free and where DOT is reported to be working well. The authors mentioned TB-related costs for Indian patients was about 40% of household income - it's catastrophic.

Minor essential revisions
(1) Check the use of the term "prospective" in the Methods section para 1. It is not consistent with the term "cross sectional" in the Abstract?

(2) Check the use of "spend" and "spent" throughout the text.

(3) Not clear. Last sentence in Patient characteristics section. "Except for 2 patients, 58 (97%) had a health insurance".

What sort of health insurance - social health insurance or private health insurance?

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

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