Reviewer's report

Title: Comparative Chest Computed Tomography Findings of Non-tuberculous Mycobacterial Lung Diseases and Pulmonary Tuberculosis in Patients with AFB Smear-Positive Sputum

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Reviewer: Chin-Chung Shu

Reviewer's report:

Yuan et al. conducted a retrospective study for reviewing the chest CT finding in case series with positive sputum acid-fast smear. Although the finding is interesting for differentiate PTB and NTM-LD, there are many drawbacks are listed as below. In particular, if sample size cannot be enlarged, the format of brief communication would be a better recommendation for presenting this great but not solid finding.

Major comments.

1. CT scans in patients with NTM colonization would be also important to be compared. In your rationale, to discriminate PTB in patients with positive AFB smear is important. However, in those with positive AFB smear, NTM colonization is more common than NTM-LD but have different characteristics.

2. Case number is too small to be a solid observation evidence, especially for honeycombing in NTM-LD. It’s should be addressed in the limitation and future validation is required.

3. Mycobacteriology data such as NTM species and positive sets of sputum is better to presented in the results section as well as radiological score for lesion area. We would like to see the comparison of the major radiological finding rather than every detail finding.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

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'