Reviewer's report

Title: Diagnostic accuracy of an integrated respiratory guideline in identifying patients with respiratory symptoms requiring screening for pulmonary tuberculosis: a cross-sectional study

Version: 3 Date: 10 July 2006

Reviewer: Bernt Lindtjorn

Reviewer's report:

The authors adequately address the issues raised.

However, I advise that they rephrase their conclusion. In the conclusion, they state: “We have demonstrated that the PALSA syndromic respiratory guideline is an effective first level screening tool for use in the primary care setting for identifying patients from among those presenting with respiratory symptoms that require bacteriological screening for pulmonary tuberculosis in high prevalence tuberculosis area.”

I do not think that the study design or the data provide sufficient evidence to make such a general statement.

I advise that they rephrase their conclusion as they write in the discussion: “The current study confirms that a nurse practitioner using the guideline is able to perform this task with sufficient accuracy when compared with the alternative “a primary care physician with access to more clinical details, and chest radiography.”

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests'