Reviewer’s report

Title: Tuberculosis patients’ reasons for and suggestions to address non-uptake of HIV testing: a cross-sectional study in the Free State Province, South Africa

Version: 1 Date: 10 January 2011

Reviewer: Barbara Marston

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Overall, this is useful work on an important topic
2. The work could be improved with a more sophisticated analysis of the results, for example, a stratified analysis that compares characteristics/thoughts of patients who do/do not accept testing. Even if this slightly more complicated analysis is not done, there needs to be more clarity about the results that are presented, and whether the denominator for reported percentages is the entire set of patients or only those that did not have HIV testing done.
3. The figures that were provided don’t match the text (titles/content). (content for fig 1 is not as reported in the text, the third fig is labeled fig 3, but title figure one, but presents the same results presented in fig 2 etc….

Minor Essential Revisions

1. In abstract methods, the phrase “subject to content analyses” could be interpreted as subjected to a specific process (as referenced in the main text of the paper) or simply a general approach (the content was somehow analyzed). It would be useful to provide some additional information about how these analyses were done.
2. In abstract results “this might imply that they had been ill-informed….is a conclusion rather than a result
3. In background, “With six in every ten patients” suggest emphasizing “six in every ten TB patients” for clarity.
4. Methods—p 6 under instrument and data collection: clarify what is meant by patient category
5. In discussion, second paragraph of p 13. Use of the work “claims” carries a connotation that could be interpreted to imply that the patients may be lying. Please consider something less judgmental like “reports”?

Discretionary Revisions

1. In the abstract results, the use of “advanced” to mean offered or answered could be confusing to some readers
2. In the results I would recommend presenting numbers without too much additional language to describe results. For example, “The sample constitutes
mostly of females (51.7%)”… Simply saying something like: The mean age of the respondents was XX; 51.7% were female,” would be as clear and more concise. There are a examples where the number could stand alone, but some readers might have arguments with the subjective value that was associated with the number—another example is at the top of p. 10 when something that occurs 12% of the time is considered “prominent” –I would prefer inarguable statements like “the most common service-related barrier identified.

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: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I have no competing interests