Author's response to reviews

Title: Integrating intensified case finding of tuberculosis into HIV care: an evaluation from rural Swaziland.

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Author's response to reviews: see over
18 April, 2011

Dear BioMed Central Editorial Team,

Thank you for your consideration and peer review of MS: 1197503832442850. Integrating intensified case finding of tuberculosis into HIV care: an evaluation from rural Swaziland.

We have addressed the reviewer’s questions in the points below and revised the manuscript using “tracked changes”. Our style is correctly formatted.

REFeree 1 Comments and responses

1. "The lower proportion of smear positives amongst those screened in our study may be explained by reliance on sputum smears alone": This paragraph is logically strange.
   • We have now corrected this paragraph based on the reviewer’s suggestions.

2. The issue is not "Using a denominator of sputums submitted from suspects ( n = 172) would have produced a higher yield of 16%." It is: "The key barrier in the pathway was that 63% of TB suspects did not return sputum specimens." In the discussion above, the author should consult an epidemiologist to discuss the imputation of missing values. "if those who missed sputum submission had a same chance of being positive as those submitted..It is very important unless the author has any counter evidence to show that "those who did not submit sputum specimen might be less likely to have TB than those submitted".
   • We consulted with an epidemiologist and agree with that imputation could be used to deal with the missing values in the group that did not submit specimens. However, we do not have sufficient data about possible demographic and explanatory variables to use this approach. The simplest method is to conduct a sensitivity analysis based on the assumption that the proportion of smear positives is likely to be similar among those who did not submit specimens. This has now been included in the discussion.

We hope that these revisions in the paper and our explanation in this letter have provided further clarity to reviewers. If any further changes or clarifications are needed, we are happy to do so.

We thank you again and look forward to receiving your feedback.

Sincerely Yours,

Susan Elden