Reviewer's report

Title: The provision and need of social support among adult and pediatric patients of Tuberculosis and TB/HIV in Lima, Peru: a qualitative study

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Reviewer: Chantal Camden

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to read this interesting manuscript. I have appreciated how the authors present well the relevance of their study in the context of Peru, and how their results bring recommendations for the TB program. I have many comments below, but only some are compulsory or essential.

Compulsory:
4.2; 4.5; 5.2; 5.3;

Essential:
2.3; 2.4; 3.2; 3.3; 4.3; 6.3; 6.4

Other comments are either positive comments or Discretionary revisions.

1 Title
1.1 - Describe well the study
1.2 - I wonder if the emphasis on HIV in the title is needed? (if so, in the manuscript it needs to be better justified)
1.3 - Not sure if it could be reword a bit to read better in English (e.g. patients "with" tuberculosis instead of "of")

2 Abstract
2.1 - Good background with relevant explanations and purposes
2.2 - Methods and results well described (although I wonder, again, if the emphasis on HIV is needed? if so, in the manuscript it needs to be better justified)
2.3 - in methods, if all the participants were on treatments, remove "in treatment" (13 parents of children in treatments) - cause confusion if it's only this group who receive treatment.
2.4 - Conclusion very interesting - but would need to be more explicitly linked with results (e.g. how the suggested improvements for the TB program relates to the NEED FOR SUPPORT results, and with the quality of life, mental health, and treatment adherence?)
3. Background

3.1 The importance of social support and the context/relevance of studying TB in Peru is well explained.

3.2 More information needed with regards to "direct observed treatment short course (DOTs)," and the controversy (what is the controversy about: the effectiveness or the access to care?) (p.2). How does it relate to the Peru TB program - is the TB program only about DOTs (p.3) and why the specification is made that medicine is free for those in treatments? Is "being in treatments" refer to something else than receiving DOTs? (maybe bring the following sentence, which is in the methods, back in the background?: "All TB patients were enrolled in DOTS therapy, which required that they be observed taking their TB medications by a healthcare professional at their respective health center.")

3.3 There is a great justification why social support is important on p.4. The authors provide many references and come up with relevant goal in the context of Peru. I however don't understand why they say "However, there are limited studies that examine the specific components of social support that are helpful" - what is specifically missing compared to what we already know? Is specifically how it applies to the context in Peru? I suspect that specific components and quality of life, mental health, and treatment adherence are keys - but what the study wants to do exactly? Does it aims at relating those goals to different forms of support, such as neighbor and family support (which have already been explored?) and stress protector and so on?

4. Method

4.1 The interview process is well described and although it makes common sense, I would have liked the authors to justify better (briefly) their chose of design, and the topics included in the interview guides.

4.2 Purposive sampling: according to which criteria? I suspect authors though participants having HIV might have different support needs - need to say it. Other criteria used?

4.3 Psychologist doing the interviews: how and by whom were they trained?

4.4 The length of the recruitment process and ethic consents description might be shorten. Likewise, information on saturation is relevant, but might be shorten.

4.5 "Codes were developed based on the topics of interest" - what were they? Were codes pre defined or they emerged from the verbatim?

4.6 Presentation of results should be moved to the results section

5. results

5.1 Results presented are really interesting, good examples and citations are used to highlight the themes, and the description of patients' experiences illustrate well the support receive and the needs for support.
5.2 The results section is however too long and need to be shortened. I am not sure if all headings are necessary (for instance, could it be possible to to integrate Participants' Recommendations to Improve TB Programs within previous themes?). I also suggested reviewing to make sure there are no redundancy between citations and text, and cutting on some citations' length.

5.3 If the goals is to look at how specific components of social support relate to quality of life, mental health, and treatment adherence, I would like to see these concepts and these links more clearly in the results section.

6. Discussion

6.1 Need an introduction before having headings (Headings are interesting because they highlight concrete points/recommendations, but I am not sure if they are necessary)

6.2 The discussion is really interesting and relevant, but is too long too! Authors might was to come back on MAJOR results, but ensure they avoid redundancy with the results section. I particularly appreciate when authors explain how their results relate to the literature in general or bring concrete suggestions (such as as TB clubs"

6.3 The limitation section brings interesting point, including the need to speak with patients who had stopped receiving treatment. To better understand the selection bias, it could be important to have a better understanding of the 'purposive sampling' (discuss above). I wonder also if there could be any recall bias?

6.4 The fact that the study was conducted in 2004 and it's 8 years later - how the findings and recommendations still apply to the current situation in Peru?

7. Conclusion

7.1 Good conclusion, interesting and highlight principles results and recommendations.

8. General

8.1 Caution with long sentences. Consider breaking it down in 2 sentences. E.g. p.2 Background. "... have demonstrated increased adherence to medication and successful treatment outcomes [2], however some..." - start a new sentence after the reference.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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