Reviewer's report

Title: Collaboration between municipal and specialist public health care in tuberculosis screening of immigrants in Norway

Version: 1 Date: 15 December 2013

Reviewer: Stephanie Topp

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Overall this is a well written an interesting paper. It documents the outcomes of a project designed to improve the follow-up of positive TB screening results in a population of asylum seekers in a district in Oslo, Norway. The authors write clearly about the setting and challenges related to implementing screening and follow-up procedures and present a useful set of experiences / recommendations for improving such programmes in similarly well-resourced settings. Below are some minor but essential revisions to improve the flow and clarity of this paper.

Major Compulsory Revisions
NONE

Minor Compulsory Revisions

Abstract:
1. Typo – Background (para 1): ‘patients referred for follow up has been’ should read ‘patients referred for follow up have been’.

Background:
2. Page 3, para 1: spell out World Health Organization when first using WHO.

3. Pg 3, para 3: ‘A specialist will...diagnose...active TB’ – could the authors define (either in text or via reference) the criteria for diagnosing active TB in this setting.

4. Pg 3, para 4: It would be helpful if the first sentence of this paragraph reminded us that screening for asylum seekers is always done in Oslo (or elsewhere?) thus providing the setting for the rest of the paragraph.

5. Pg3, para 4: Is St Olav’s the main and/or only POPD where this sort of screening is done? Would be helpful to explain why this hospital was picked for the study.

6 Pg 3, para4: Please define (as far as possible) what you mean by ‘waited longer than is acceptable’ – this can mean different things in different settings and so is important to be as clear as possible.

7. Pg 4, para1: It would be useful if, in addition to outlining the main aims of the
project, the authors also made explicit the main aim of this study. This becomes clear later in the paper but it would be helpful to flag it in this paragraph.

Methods

8. Pg 4, para 2: As above, why was the Municipality of Trondheim chosen? Is this where all asylum seekers are screened for TB? If so, please make this clear from the outset.

9. Pg 4, para 4: Suggest revision of the phrase: ‘TB screening patients who are HIV positive’ to read: ‘Patients screened for TB who are known to be HIV positive…’

10. Pg 4, para 6: Before describing the intervention it would be helpful for the authors to indicate that they introduced an intervention and used a control group to compare the effects of the intervention. As it currently reads, the authors mention ‘control groups’ in the Data Collection section with no previous mention in the main body of text about what the control/intervention groups relate to. At this point the authors may also refer back to the ‘aims of the study’ as suggested for inclusion at the end of the Background section.

11. Additionally, the section of data collection may be better positioned after the section describing the intervention since the reader will then be acquainted with the setting and rationale for collecting different types of data.

12. Pg 5, para 2: ‘The staff at VICO and RHC was asked..’ changed to ‘The staff at VICO and RHC were asked’. Staff in this context indicates a plural.

Results

13. Pg 7, para 1: Authors must explain in greater detail what they mean when they say: ‘...but the control group had to be summoned several times before they arrived.’ Presumably this would have created a longer delay in accessing services and so some sort of noticeable difference?

Discussion

14. Pg 8, para 2: please fix typo in last sentence of this paragraph: ‘...have higher risk for reactivation of TB then...’ should read ‘have higher risk for reactivation of TB than...’

15. Pg 8, para 3: Authors should qualify the statement ‘patients...diagnosed with TB disease before having symptoms. As a consequence, they could not have infected many others.’ While this is certainly a reasonable assumption, the authors present no supporting evidence and so must be circumspect in their claims.

16. Pg 8, para 3: The authors must be careful not to over-interpret their results. There is not supporting evidence for the statement: ‘Performing screening in the municipality was probably more rewarding when a conclusion followed quickly’
17. Pg 8, para 4: Please change: ‘what is the main problems locally..’ to ‘what are the main problems locally’

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**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