Reviewer's report

Title: Resource utilization pattern and cost of tuberculosis treatment from the provider and patient perspective in the state of Penang, Malaysia

Version: 2 Date: 22 December 2013

Reviewer: Maryam Farooqui

Reviewer's report:

General views: This is a very interesting paper that should fit the readership of the journal. The issue is extremely important and under researched area, and the authors are to be commended for attempting to conduct this kind of research. Description of resource utilization pattern is interesting and helpful for the readers to understand the cost structure of tuberculosis in Malaysia.

I have made suggestions about areas for improvement as detailed below.

Minor revisions:

Abstract:
• Avoid abbreviations in the abstract.
• Conclusion: Not clear and need to be written again.
• Key words: add cost of TB treatment, and predictors of TB treatment cost.

Background:
• Page 4 Para 3: need a few more citations.
• Page 4 Para 3: Deletion of last sentence.

Major compulsory revisions

Methods:
• What is incidence based study? Needs further explanation.
• Who trained the nurse? What training she received?
• Details of all service resources should be mentioned.
• Hospital Pulau Pinang should be replaced with Penang General Hospital.
• Describe the study setting as a separate heading. Give a short description of staff and activities.
• Since the authors interviewed the patients at two time points, a brief description of follow-up mechanism in place is very important.
• Was there any feasibility constraints?
• What authors means regarding the term "annualized" (Page 7, para 1).
• Why the cost of Non-TB medicines was included in the patient cost as this cost
may not be related to cost of treatment for TB.

- Study approval should be replaced with ethical approval.
- Discuss in detail the eligibility criteria of the patients (inclusion/exclusion criteria). Referring to Table 1, non Malaysians were included as well, as per my knowledge non- Malaysian have to bear all the medical cost on their own. I wonder if it will affect the study findings by any means.
- The study was conducted in one of the government hospital where most of the services are provided free of cost, how the authors can justify conducting this type of study in a government hospital instead of a private hospital?

Results

- Average household income given was for a month or for a year?
- Mention the average duration of TB treatment in days as well.
- Why 212 patients were considered for estimation of patient cost why not all 226 patients were included.
- Mention total number of patients interviewed for both the phases.
- The lost productivity days provided is for whole treatment or for what time period?
- Provide min and max of lost productivity days along with the mean and median values.

Conclusion

- Conclusion is not clear and fails to conclude the study according to the objectives sets for the study, rewriting of conclusion is advised.
- Conclusion should not contain results and it is observed that authors have produced some extra results which are not even presented in the result section; these results should be brought in the result sections.

Add the limitations of the study.

What Support was received from the Institute of Postgraduate studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Please make it clear? Is that any financial support received please mention clearly?

References: 5, 20, 22, 23, 26, 28, 29, 32 incomplete references.

Table 1: mention socio-demographic and clinical characteristics separately.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**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