Reviewer's report

Title: A Retrospective Review of a Tertiary Hospital's Isolation and De-isolation Policy for Suspected Pulmonary Tuberculosis

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Reviewer: Gau-Jun Tang

Reviewer's report:

The author did revise their conclusion and the inference seems more reasonable. However, I still have some questions.

First, author stated in the introduction that “there is no specific guideline to define such patients, and the decision to isolate is left to the discretion of the managing physician. Thus, “Patients with suspected PTB are isolated till three consecutive respiratory samples have been shown to be smear-negative for AFB” is only a suggestion.

In the discussion “Based on CDC guidelines, our institution’s infection control policy requires patients to have at least three negative sputum AFB smears before they can be de-isolated [8].”

I am confused with your institution’s current infection control policy for the isolation of patients with suspected PTB. Please state precisely.

Table 3 elegantly demonstrate the result:

More than 3 negative AFB smear before de-isolation (n=97): positive TB culture: 17

Less than 3 negative AFB smear before de-isolation (n=24): positive TB culture: 3.

If patients with less than 3 negative AFB smear are de-isolated prematurely still yielded positive TB culture later. How can the author jumped to the conclusion that “our institution’s current infection control policy for the isolation of patients with suspected PTB is robust.”

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:
'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.