Reviewer's report

Title: Tuberculin skin test responses in adolescent school-going children aged 11 to 18 years in rural South India

Version: 1  Date: 22 July 2014

Reviewer: Jabulani Ncayiyana

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Justification of using 2TU of PPD instead 1TU of PPD is not convincing, especially because the study by Chadha et al, 2000 (attached), they cited did not support the use of 2TU of PPD in this setting.

2. The Methods are not well described and sufficient details are lacking.

   2.1 The study design is not clearly defined. Authors state that the study was conducted from February 2007 to July 2010. However, this description is inadequate since the study is the sub-study of a large prospective cohort. Therefore, the period of February 2007 to July 2010 is not clear whether is for this sub-study which is limited to baseline data or was for the parent study.

   2.2 Authors cited Murthy et al, 2013, for study enrollment and design, which involved two-step TST in the same population. However, this reference to Murthy et al, 2013 is at least confusing if not misleading, since this study is restricted to first TST results.

3. In their discussion and conclusions, authors make substantive comparisons of their findings to previous studies in India, which they said they couldn’t make, since these studies used 1TU of PPD.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. Authors failed to clearly define latent TB infection case. It would be useful to provide definition of what 1-4 mm and 5-9 mm meant for the purpose of this study.

- Discretionary Revisions

1. The title fail to convey what has been found. It doesn’t convey that the study also looked at the associations of socio-demographic and clinical characteristics with TST positivity and non-response.

2. The methods section of the abstract suffers similar deficiencies highlighted in the manuscript.

3. In Methods section, providing a flowchart for showing with numbers tuberculin testing from adolescents eligible for testing to final number of adolescents with TST results will greatly improve this section.
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.