Author’s response to reviews

Title: Clinical Diagnostic Value of Simultaneous Amplification and Testing for the Diagnosis of Sputum-scarce Pulmonary Tuberculosis

Authors:

Liping Yan (13564641601@163.com)
Qing Zhang (zhangbing123@163.com)
He-ping Xiao (xiaoheping_sars@163.com)

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Author’s response to reviews:

L 94 - Replace pulmonary tuberculosis by PTB
We have replaced in INTRODUCTION, L 94

L 134 - Replace MTB by MTBC
We have replaced in PATIENTS AND METHODS, L 134

L 135 - Correct: "on analysis of AFB in resected lung tissues". Remove (find the acid fast bacilli).
We have corrected in PATIENTS AND METHODS, L 135.

L 164 - Replace Mycobacterium tuberculosis by M. tuberculosis
We have replaced in PATIENTS AND METHODS, L 163.

L 237 - Replace Mycobacterium tuberculosis by Mycobacterium tuberculosis complex
We have replaced in RESULTS, L 233.
L 278 - Replace MTB by MTBC
We have replaced in RESULTS, L 271.

BALF is used from the beginning of the manuscript in full and only in the discussion is abbreviated.
We have replaced from the beginning of the manuscript to the end.

We have included information on the following points in the main manuscript in our response to Reviewer 2.

111-sputum-scarce PTB individuals; did the authors try sputum induction in patients not able to expectorate a sputum?
We have included this information in the text in INTRODUCTION, L 110

L157-What was the final concentration of NaOH used for decontamination of the BAL? How long were the samples exposed to NaOH-15, 20, 25 or 30? Did the authors used NALC as well?
We have included this information in the text in PATIENTS AND METHODS, L 158

190-764 patients were analyzed and 70% were diagnosed with TB; however, only 116 out of 536 (22%) patients with TB were confirmed by microbiology. This is a low figure. Can you explain further in the DISCUSSION section?
We have included this information in the text in DISCUSSION, L263

L197-120 PTB patients (96 were only culture positive and 20 smear positive) - what happened to the missing 4?
We have replaced in RESULTS, L 217-221.
L235-A GeneXpert cartridge costs $100 - Is China not eligible for a discounted price of $10?
We have included this information in the text in DISCUSSION, L255-257

L239-Was SAT-TB assay performed 7 days a week?
We have included this information in the text in DISCUSSION, L259-260

L259-Only 2 patients were diagnosed with NTM - any explanations? Smears can be AFB positive in NTM disease; therefore, one should not call them false-positive.
We have corrected it in the text in DISCUSSION, L282