Reviewer’s report

Title: Recurrent tuberculosis in Finland 1995-2013: a clinical and epidemiological cohort study

Version: 1 Date: 29 Aug 2017

Reviewer: Randall Reves

Reviewer’s report:

This revision still lacks a presentation of the denominators, and numerators of the patient categories considered in the analysis of risk-factors for relapse. The different modes of treatment in details shown in Table 1 are apparently known only for the 50 patients with relapses so the analysis by treatment mode, lacking a comparison group, is only descriptive in nature.

Specific comments

Consider deletion of table 1 or moving it to an appendix if data are not available for the entire population or an appropriate comparison group.

Consider beginning the results with a table describing the demographics and clinical features and available risk factors for relapses and non-relapses (or denominators by categories), such as in L. Kim reference 5. If treatment outcomes of cured, completed, failed, died, lost-to-follow-up are available for all patients, please include these in the table as was reported in the subset of patients with WGS data in the prior report; 56% of 21 patients in that analysis had "completed treatment."

Note why 8084 are in this analysis, not 8299 in the prior paper for 1995-2013.

Consider the limitations and validity of the analysis of outcomes after lengthy follow-up. With a median age of 70 and IQR 56-79 among Finnish-born patients, one can anticipate many deaths due to all causes including undiagnosed TB during 18 years of follow-up (Table 4), raising questions about comparative rates in lengthy "follow-up."

Table 2 does not include numerators and denominators by category - e.g. pulmonary and non-pulmonary, male and female. If these are not provided in the suggested new Table 1, please provide in this table.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

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