Author’s response to reviews

Title: Pretreatment loss to follow-up of tuberculosis patients in Chennai, India: a cohort study with implications for health systems strengthening

Authors:

Beena Thomas (beenathomas@nirt.res.in)
Ramnath Subbaraman (ramnath.sub@gmail.com)
Senthil Sellappan (senthilsel@gmail.com)
Chandra Suresh (chandrasuresh2@yahoo.co.in)
J. Lavanya (dtotncni@rntcp.org)
Savari Lincy (a.lincy8@gmail.com)
Agnes Raja (agneslawraja@gmail.com)
S. Kokila (gokibhuvana@gmail.com)
B. Javeed (javeedsmile@gmail.com)
S. Arumugam (sarumugam6666@gmail.com)
Soumya Swaminathan (doctorsoumya@yahoo.com)
Kenneth Mayer (khmayer@gmail.com)

Version: 3 Date: 28 Feb 2018

Author’s response to reviews:

1. Please clarify whether any minors (<16) were included in the PTLFU patient sample in the methods section of your manuscript. If so, please clarify in the Ethics approval and consent to participate section whether consent was obtained from a parent or guardian on behalf of any participants under the age of 16.

We apologize for the confusion in the methods section. As noted, in the methods, we report findings from two datasets: (1) the May 2015 dataset containing patient address and phone number information entered from patient registries; and (2) the pretreatment loss to follow-up dataset containing patients tracked from October 2015 to June 2016. Dataset #1 (which is only secondary data without any information gathered from direct contact with human subjects) contains data across all age ranges, including people under age 18. Dataset #2 (which includes
patients who were actively tracked by the study team) only includes data for patients who are 18 years of age or older.

We have corrected the age criteria in the methods and tables to reflect that data were only collected on patients ≥ 18 years of age for the pretreatment loss to follow-up cohort, as we screened out patients <18 years of age when identifying smear-positive patients from the designated microscopy center registers. No patients under the age of 18 were contacted as part of that patient tracking exercise, and no interviews were conducted on individuals <18 years of age. Our apologies for this confusion, which on our end was due to confusion of the age range with the May 2015 dataset.

2. Please move all tables to after the references.

We have done this.

3. At this stage, please upload your manuscript as a single, final, clean version that does not contain any tracked changes, comments, highlights, strikethroughs or text in different colours. All relevant tables/figures/additional files should also be clean versions. Figures (and additional files) should remain uploaded as separate files.

We have done this.