Reviewer’s report

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

Version: 1 Date: 04 Dec 2017

Reviewer: Carrie Tudor

Reviewer’s report:

The authors have conducted an important study to examine and quantify how patients are lost to follow up between diagnosis and start of treatment and registration.

1. Abstract: in the conclusions the authors provide a nice summary of the results, but it might be helpful to the reader if they could provide a few words on the next steps or interpretation of the results instead of just repeating them.

2. There are a few typos or misspelled words the authors may want to revise. For example, on page 8, line 4 - it should be "half" instead of "have".

3. I believe that REDCap has a preferred citation on their website (https://www.project-redcap.org/) the authors may want to consider adding this.

4. In the Methods section, the authors mention qualitative interviews with the patients they were able to find and link back to care. But the results or findings from these interviews are not included in the manuscript. It may be helpful to the reader to cite the other manuscript where the qualitative findings are discussed. This is on page 11 and page 25.

5. As the main reasons for patients being lost seem to be related to health systems issues. It would be helpful to the reader to know what the findings were from the qualitative interviews. Or if the patient reports from the qualitative interviews also indicated health system issues.

6. The conclusions the authors describe are appropriate for the results, but wonder if they might say more about what can be done to address these issues going forward.

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

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.
Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I declare that I have no competing interests.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report
including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal