Reviewer's report

Title: Increasing Nontuberculous Mycobacteria Reporting Rates and Species Diversity Identified in Clinical Laboratory Reports

Version: 0 Date: 10 Dec 2017

Reviewer: Jann-Yuan Wang

Reviewer's report:

This is an epidemiologic report of NTM based on laboratory reporting data. The authors showed that NTM reporting rate increased from 8.2 per 100,000 persons in 1994 to 16 per 100,100 persons in 2014. Between the two years, Mycobacterium avium complex (MAC) rate increased by more than 3-fold and M. abscessus-chelonae by about 2-fold. The manuscript is well written. However, there are some fundamental limitations in this study.

Major comment:

1. The major limitation comes from the original data itself. It contains only isolate numbers, rather than case numbers. Presence of NTM in respiratory samples does not equal to NTM disease. In addition, increase in isolate numbers may probably due to multiple sampling during one's disease course. If treatment for NTM is not necessary, the patient's number of isolates tends to be larger than that in NTM patients whose NTM was successfully treated. However, the latter should be the one that doctors need to pay more attention to.

2. Is laboratory reporting for NTM obligatory in the four States?

Specific comment:

1. The NTM rate seems different in the four States. Do the authors have any idea about that?
2. Line 146: The sentence is redundant because it has been described in Line 131-132.
4. Some numbers in Table 2 are different from Figure 1. For example, MAC rate in 2014 is 8.53 in Figure 1 but 10.61 in Table 2.
5. M. chelonae-abscessus Group plus M. mucogenicum-phocaicum are combined in Figure 1 but separated in Table 2. Why?

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.
No

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.
No

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I am able to assess the statistics

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