Reviewer's report

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

Version: 0 Date: 12 Jan 2018

Reviewer: Ettie M. Lipner

Reviewer's report:

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This is an important study because it further documents the increase in NTM reports in various states within the US and begs the question, as the author states, is exposure to NTMs increasing?

Comments:

1. Figure 1
How was Percent Change calculated? It is unclear how the author arrived at the percent changes reported. This should be explained in more detail in the methods section. I tried to calculate the Percent Changes, but I wasn't able to come up with the same estimates. Additionally, the denominators that were used to calculate the Rate should be provided in this figure.

2. Figure 2 also needs to be explained in more detail, or perhaps refer the reader to the tables where the numbers are coming from that determine how the rates are reported in this figure.

3. Conclusion, Line 260
The sentence needs further justification. Why does identifying NTM species most frequently associated with disease help to identify likely sources of exposure?
4. Background, Lines 64-65
This is an awkward sentence, as it is not clear what the ranges of percentages are referring to. M. avium 3 to 26% is a range of what? Same for M. abscessus.

5. Background, Line 71
"Additionally, NTMs are classified as slow growers…". Not all NTMs are classified as slow growers. Please consider rewriting as "NTMs that are classified as slow growers take 7 days…".

6. Background, Line 77
Please delete the comma that falls in between "human-specimen" and "reports".

7. Historical Data Comparison, Line 110
Change "what has changed as the procedures" to "what has changed are the procedures"

8. Discussion, Line 180
Please delete the word "the" in the sentence and change to "State NTM reports capture illness in the both…” to "State NTM reports capture illness in both…”

9. Discussion, Line 232
Remove the "s" from "populations".

10. Discussion, Line 247
Please change "affect" to "effect".

11. Discussion, Line 253
Please change "file" to "filed".

12. Discussion, Line 256
Please change "This mean" to "This means".

13. Discussion, Line 257
Please change "a patient may have acquire" to "a patient may have acquired"

**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.
Yes

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