Reviewer’s report

Title: High prevalence of tuberculosis among university students in Northwest Ethiopia: A retrospective study

Version: 2 Date: 2 March 2014

Reviewer: Amenu Wesen Denegetu

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Title: High prevalence of tuberculosis among university students in Northwest Ethiopia: A retrospective study

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Major Compulsory revisions

Title

1. It is clear that the finding revealed high prevalence of TB among the study group. However, I am not comfortable very well with the title, as it seems the researches already knew the finding before data collection.

2. Hence, I suggest modifying the title; like for example, ‘Five year trend analysis of TB prevalence and treatment outcome among….’ Or ‘Retrospective trend analysis of TB case finding and treatment outcome among…’ Or ‘Five-year TB case notification among…, 2007-2011’ or other modification which avoids the word ‘high’ so that the reader will be more interested to go through the finding.

Methods

The authors need to explain the ‘design’, a little bite in details of ‘data collection procedures’, at least include what has been stated in the abstract section, ‘….among students at UoG from January 2007 to December 2011’, who collected the data? Was there any inclusion or exclusion criteria? Any discarded data, because of incomplete chart or any other reason?

Again, how was the data grouped by year? Were the data grouped based on their date of diagnosis or date of treatment completed? For example, a patient may need at least 8 months to complete the treatment, but the patient might be diagnosed in 2007 or 2008 but might have completed treatment in the following years, so how did you group these kinds of data?

In general, I suggest to enrich the ‘Methods’ section so that the reader will have better understanding of the data collection procedure.

Minor revisions
Abstract

1. Result section: revise/rewrite the sentence ‘Higher prevalence of TB, 1830.1 vs 735.6 and 993.9 vs 659.6 per 100,000 populations, was observed in social sciences and humanities faculty than the medical college campus’, it is not very clear.

2. Better to put ‘TSR’ here, as it is put in your result section.

Result

1. I suggest to put two subsections under the ‘Result’ section after the socio-demographic paragraph, something like:

   a. Prevalence and category of Tuberculosis

   b. Treatment Outcome, so that readers will be able to trace key findings easily.

2. I suggest to rewrite the sentence ‘The most frequent (166, 91.7%) age group was between 19 and 23 years of age.’ As for example, ‘Majority (166, 91.7%) of the cases were in their ages of 19 to 23 years’.

3. I wish if you could categorize participants by year of study, like 1st yr, 2nd yr, 3rd yr and 4th + as seniors. I think you did not collect the data by that, but if you have data at hand by that category, that may be more interesting than the age, because everybody knows the age groups of university students. Besides, the reader will have better understanding of who are most at risk for developing TB disease among the students.

4. You cannot present the national figure in your Result section. The authors need to take the sentence: ‘The prevalence in 2011 was 1.5 times higher than the national TB prevalence in the same year’ to the Discussion section with appropriate references. Besides, the sentence ‘The prevalence of TB in the University was consistently high in all the five years’, needs to be put in the ‘Discussion’ section.

5. The authors need to explain the category of the remaining nearly 20% (35 patients) of the patients, especially if there were ‘chronic cases’, which are concerns for TB control program due to emergence of MDR-TB?

6. The sentence: ‘The highest rate of treatment failure was 3.1% in 2008’ seems misleading. Rather, I suggest to put in the previous sentence together, like: ‘Each of one treatment failure case was reported in three of the five years, 2007, 2008 and 2010’.

7. The figure 82.9% in 2011, needs to be corrected to 82.6% based on your table 5.

Discussion

1. 1st sentence seems repeated; you have stated at your introduction section and also not acknowledged here.

2. Sentence 2 = rewrite the sentence; it is a bite complex sentence.

3. The sentence ‘Accordingly, in the current study, there were two treatment failure, two relapse, and two default cases from the 2007 and 2008
cohorts, the 2009 and 2010 cohorts, and the 2008 and 2011 cohorts, respectively’ can be rewritten as for example: …each of two cases of treatment failure, relapse and defaults among cohorts of 2007 and 2008, 2009 and 2010, 2008 and 2011; respectively. But this is what has been stated on the result section, here it need to be discussed what it means and can be even compared with previous reports of national data or elsewhere.

4. Paragraph 4= the information ‘In other words, there were six (3.3%) students who were started on a retreatment regimen during the five years period. Out of this, one of the treatment failure cases was diagnosed to have multidrug resistant (MDR) TB and was started with second line regimen at St. Peter’s Specialized TB Hospital in Addis Ababa.’ Is not mentioned in the result section; hence, try to mention there adequately. Whatever to be discussed should be what has been discussed in the result section.

5. It is advisable for authors to discuss their opinions why the smear negative and extra-pulmonary TB cases proportions are high. In addition, which sites of EP cases were identified common?

6. In general for Discussion section, I suggest discussing the whole UoG cases together rather than discussing by campus, that may not give much meaning as absolute figures are very low by campus.

7. The authors are advised to include some regional TB data (Amhara regional health bureau TBL control), if possible.

Conclusion

1. Were there any limitations and strengths of the study??

References

1. Ref. 1, 18, 23-27 need URL and accessed date.
3. Generally, the authors need to re-visit the reference section.

Table 3: I see ANRS at the bottom of the table, but you have not used?

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests