Reviewer’s report

Title: TB treatment delays and associated factors within the Zimbabwe National Tuberculosis programme

Version: 1 Date: 30 April 2014

Reviewer: Paulo de Tarso Dalcin

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This is a very interesting study evaluating the extent of both patient and health system delays in accessing TB treatment within the public health facilities under the Zimbabwe National Tuberculosis Programme. This manuscript is addressing a very important issue in the context of TB control. In this study, the median patient delay was 28 days and the median health system delay was 2 days. Starting TB treatment at district / mission vs rural primary healthcare facilities was associated with shorter patient delays whilst taking self-medication increased patient delays. Four or more visits to health facilities prior to TB diagnosis were associated with health system delays.

# Major Compulsory Revisions

1) In a previous study, the factors that were independently associated with patient delay for TB treatment were cocaine and crack. The authors did not analyze these variables in the present study. They should discuss this issue in the limitations of the study.

2) I am not sure if the authors included only pulmonary TB in the study. They should clarify this in the Methods section.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.