Reviewer’s report

Title: Completeness and Reliability of the Republic of South Africa National Tuberculosis (TB) Surveillance System

Version: 2  
Date: 11 November 2014

Reviewer: Nulda Beyers

Reviewer’s report:

The manuscript is much improved and it is important to publish these data, but there are still some areas that need to be clarified. These are minor essential revisions and the authors can be trusted to make these.

1. Page 7: As per the letter with responses – clearly indicate in the manuscript that the blue cards are filled in only for cases who in fact start treatment. The wording is still confusing.

2. Page 7 – just to clarify – this evaluation was for the 2008 data?

3. Page 11 last sentence of ethics: Please change prior to implementation to prior to evaluation.

4. Page 12 and referring to previous question on 721 of the 857 – I am now even more confused. In methodology section the authors state that data were collected for 2008, but in answering this query, they state that the 857 was “simply a quick count of all the suspects in the register for quarter 1 2009” Please clarify and correct.

5. The explanation given by the authors for the reason that there were fewer records at national level than at provincial and district level, should be included in the manuscript as result and discussion.

6. Page 15: First paragraph - Mention is made of the laboratory system and that the TB data are not linked to laboratory system. Please include in the methodology section/setting that there is a centralised laboratory system in SA.

7. Page 17: Please change the sentence: These findings suggest that one third of persons suspected of having TB disease due to symptoms or due to close contact with a known TB case who present to a health facility and are tested and diagnosed with TB are not started on treatment or notified of their disease to These findings suggest that one third of persons who are diagnosed with TB are not started on treatment or notified of their disease. to correctly reflect the data.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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