Author’s response to reviews

Title: Delay in tuberculosis diagnosis and treatment in Amhara state, Ethiopia

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear editor,

Thank you for giving us the chance to revise our manuscript (BHSR-D-18-01813R1) and we also thank the reviewers for constructive comments and sharing ideas that help us a lot to learn. The following is point by point response to each reviewers:

Reviewer reports:

Sven Gudmund Hinderaker (Reviewer 1): This is a study on delay in TB. It has some challenges.

1. Language needs to be improved. Both abstract and main text needs revision.

Response: thank you, we extensively revise to improve the language as seen in the new version manuscript. And if the reviewer still shows us specific area, we are ready to revise further and also learn.

2. One important issue is potential BIAS. You have SELECTED patients to represent all 7 districts, but we do not know criteria for selection. Consecutive? Patient under treatment? Defined dates? Patients who came for collection of drugs? We do not know exactly how selection was done. Any exclusion criteria? All ages?

Response: thank you, now we clearly put in the new version manuscript as stated in the method section line 94-113. In brief, in north Shoa zone, there are 24 districts. 30% of the North Shoa zone districts (seven districts) were selected based on geographical accessibility to represent all areas of the zone. All patients under treatment in the seven districts (162 patients on TB treatment) were included when they came for collection of drugs or monitoring diagnosis regardless of age and sex. Critically ill patients who did not respond to questions were excluded from the study.
3. Definition is now written in BACKGROUND but not clear. Is it smart to follow common
definitions. "Patient delay" usually from symptoms to diagnosis. "Health system delay" from
diagnosis to initiation of treatment. For ANALYSIS you define what you define as LONG
"delay".

Response: thank you for the guidance, and now definition has been included in the new version
manuscript of the background and abstract section.

4. As the other reviewers say I think better simplify title: "Delay in tuberculosis diagnosis and
treatment in Amhara State, Ethiopia"

Response: thank you, now it has been simplified as: "Delay in tuberculosis diagnosis and
treatment in Amhara State, Ethiopia" in the new version manuscript.

5. References must have full info. Website NOT needed. e.g ref.# 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 14, 16.
Documents (not papers) need like this in bibliography: Authors. Title. Place of publication,
Publisher:Year. (Website is optional.)

Response: thank you, we extensively the bibliography as the reviewer’s advice. However, for
ref.# 1, we couldn’t get the publisher name and only we found the document online and put the
site online.

6. Table titles can be simplified: e.g.

Table 1 "Characteristics of tuberculosis patients in seven districts of North Shoa district,
Ethiopia, December 2017."

Response: thank you, now it has been simplified in the new version manuscript as the reviewers’
advice.

Table 2. "Care seeking and investigations among tuberculosis patients in seven districts of North
Shoa district, Ethiopia, December 2017." Almost same as Table 1.

Response: thank you, now it has been simplified in the new version manuscript as the reviewers’
advice.

Table 3. "Determinants of delay in diagnosis of tuberculosis in seven districts of North Shoa
district, Ethiopia, December 2017."

Response: thank you, now it has been simplified in the new version manuscript as the reviewers’
advice.
7. Table 3. IF you have 95% CI you need not p-values. Write in table footnote which adjustment factors you used. This can also be mentioned in Methods/analysis. We do not know how adjustment was done.

Response: thank you, it (backward LR adjustment) has been included in the methods/analysis part and also in table footnote. P value in the table has also been removed.

Rubia Laine de Paula Andrade (Reviewer 3): The manuscript was revised and have been improved a lot, especially on the methods. At this moment, I only have two suggestions:

- Remove "(TB)" from the title;

Response: thank you so much, "(TB)" has been removed from the title in the new manuscript.

- Ask someone to review the language.

Response: thank you, we extensively revise the new version manuscript.