Author’s response to reviews

Title: Patient and health care system characteristics are associated with delayed treatment of tuberculosis cases in Taiwan

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Point to point response

Reviewer 1

1.1 Response to reviewer 3, question 8:

We have noticed that you have included Kaplan Meir curves in the response to the comment from reviewer 3, but you do not appear to have included these plots in your actual manuscript. We understand that you may not wish to add them as an actual figures, but please upload these plots as supplementary files, as other readers may also be interested in seeing these plots.

R1.1

We have added Kaplan Meir curves as Supplementary Figure 1.

1.2 Clean version

At this stage, please upload a clean version of your manuscript, without any tracked changes or otherwise highlighted text, as this may interfere with the production process.
R1.2

We have uploaded a clean version.

1.3 List of abbreviations

Please remove your list of abbreviations from your declarations, and instead insert it as a separate section located between your conclusions and your declarations.

R1.3

We have removed the list of abbreviations from declarations and insert it as a separate section located between conclusions and declarations.

Reviewer 2

2.1 How is the role of contact investigation and preventive treatment in nursing homes and other health facilities?

R2.1

Due to lower sensitivity to TST (tuberculin skin test) in the elderly, researchers suggest that testing by interferon-gamma release assay (IGRA) may be considered in the elderly (Lin et al., 2019). However, researchers were concerned about adverse medication reaction risks for latent tuberculosis infections (LTBIs) in the elderly population, and suggested further studies should examine IGRA testing and LTBI treatment tolerance in elderly populations that have high comorbidity in nursing homes or other healthcare settings (Lai et al., 2016). We have added the reviewer's suggestions in the Discussion section.

References


2.2 Is there any issues with use of new TB diagnosis methods which offer shorter waiting time to get result?
R2.2

Researchers in Taiwan have proved that the use of GeneXpert for the rapid detection of rifampicin resistance (RR) was more effective than phenotypic culture-based drug susceptibility testing (DST) in confirmed RR and multidrug-resistant (MDR) cases (Chiang et al., 2018). However, due to the cost, GeneXpert is still not popular under Taiwan’s universal health coverage model. We have added the reviewer's suggestions in the Discussion.

Reference


2.3 Is potential transmission in the community due to longer HSD associated with TB incidents in the district?

R2.3

From a large tuberculosis contact cohort (n=312,322) in Taiwan, researchers (Lee et al., 2017) found that TB risk among contacts remained higher than the general population after a 5-year interval. However, whether an ongoing transmission in the community is associated with TB incidents in the district requires further research design, which is beyond the scope of our study.

Reference