Reviewer’s report

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

Version: 1 Date: 23 Jan 2019

Reviewer: Esther Buregyeya

Reviewer's report:

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21/01/19

Dear Chief Editor,

BMC Health Services Research Journal

Chien-Chou et al. Patient and health care system characteristics are associated with delayed treatment of tuberculosis cases in Taiwan

Comments

Important paper on critical issues on timely diagnosis and initiation of tuberculosis in Taiwan after the phasing out of specialized TB care system and declining incidence.

1. Line 84, the authors make reference to Figure 1, however the figures are not labeled and so it is hard to tell which figure is which.

2. Line 116, the authors mention that they were working in a restricted environment - no internet connection. How is this statement relevant to their study?

3. Line 141-4, the authors refer categorization of respiratory episodes and talk of using the interval between the visits, equal or less than 60 days. However, the basis for this categorization is not provided.
4. Line 190, it is mentioned that the percentages of access to TB diagnosis and treatments services at the initial visit were 20.5% and 3.3%, respectively at the national level. From the Figure 3 you refer to, it is not clear how you arrived at this finding. Is it possible to have information in Figure 2 & 3, be presented together for one to appreciate the incidence and access to diagnosis and treatment.

5. Line 203, Figure 4, am not convinced that the line graph represents this information compared to a bar graph or another method and need to show p-value to show how much difference there is.

6. Line 225, 'The results suggest that 79.5% & 96.7% of TB patients were not…. ' This result seem to be appearing for the first time in the discussion section. It should be presented in the results section first.

7. Table 1 & 2, age < 65 and < 65 are overlapping age categories with 65 years in both categories. This shows the analysis for age in the two tables is wrong.

8. Given that the authors did a survival analysis, it would have been good to see the Kaplan Meir curve.

**Are the methods appropriate and well described?**
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Does the work include the necessary controls?**
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?**
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?**
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I recommend additional statistical review
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