Acid-fast bacilli culture positivity and drug resistance in abdominal tuberculosis

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Sir:

The recent report on acid-fast bacilli culture positivity and drug resistance in abdominal tuberculosis is very interesting [1]. Samant et al. found that acid-fast bacilli (AFB) culture positivity was averagely 50 % and the resistance was detected in estimated 15 % [1]. In fact, the detection rate of AFB organism in non-sputum specimen is usually low. Although the technique used in this report, BACTEC, is acceptable, there are also some laboratory concerns. The contamination is the important consideration to be aware of in using BACTEC [2]. In addition, the false-positive result for drug resistance is also observed in using BACTEC [3]. Piersimoni et al. suggested using “reduced inoculum (RI) assay to confirm all PZA resistance results obtained” [3]. To increase the detection rate, the use of molecular diagnosis tool can be helpful [4]. However, in resource-limited setting, the alternative use of “BACTEC combined with conventional solid medium” can also be a good alternative to increase the chance for yield of organism [5]. Based on the rather high drug resistance rate in the present report, it is necessary to find a more diagnostic tool for determination of the organism.

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