CONCLUSION

This study failed to demonstrate an association between vitamin C levels, stress hormone response and acute phase reactants. This may suggest a limited role of vitamin C in steroidogenesis and catecholamine synthesis in our patients or alternatively that other factors were playing a more important role. The low levels of vitamin C in both the study and control patients raises further questions as to whether African people in general have low levels of vitamin C and if so, why?
THE FUTURE

If further investigation in this field is to be undertaken, the following questions should be evaluated:

- Investigate the levels of plasma vitamin C in African people, both healthy and those with disease, to see if vitamin C levels in general tend to be low even in this population group

- If low vitamin C levels are generally found, studies should be undertaken to investigate reasons for this

- Try to identify a subset of patients who could act as appropriate controls for a further study, with normal plasma vitamin C levels, equivalent stress to tuberculosis patients and study the levels of vitamin C in relationship to stress hormone response and acute phase reactants in these controls and tuberculosis patients

- Evaluate the levels of plasma vitamin C, cortisol, catecholamines, and acute phase reactants before, during and after completion of tuberculosis therapy, and compare these with controls in the same time period

- Evaluate the effects and outcome of supplementation of vitamin C on stress hormone levels and acute phase reactants before, during and after tuberculosis therapy.