

How much do family members of MDR-TB patients understand about Tuberculosis treatment?



Title: How much do family members of MDR-TB patients understand about Tuberculosis treatment?

Category: Public health practice

Topic: A00 Tuberculosis

Sub-topic: A02 Drug resistance/MDR-TB treatment management

Content: Background: MDR-TB is growing concern for India in recent days. This could be mainly contributed due to irrational perception pattern adopted by healthcare providers starting from unqualified or less-than-fully-qualified to specialists including pulmonologist. With increase in number of MDR-TB cases, community engagement strategies were piloted under Project Axshya focusing on counseling families of MDR-TB patients. The process was adopted with an aim to involve family members, create awareness about treatment process, adverse reactions, and to restrain from defaulting.

Method: The pilot was conducted in Salem district of Tamil Nadu, India. From the total sample of 75 families, 50 family members of the MDR-TB patients in Salem district were randomly selected and interviewed with a structured question.

Result: Family members interviewed (96%) were unaware about type of TB treatment and other treatment details. In addition members (48%) were apprehensive about the patient who took treatment for cough rather than TB per se. 64% reported to have stopped treatment (duration lasting from 1 to 7 days) for personal reasons. More than 80% of affected patients belong to families of low income and 52% of TB patients were unable to work leading to catastrophic burden.

Conclusion: Family member's awareness levels are low for MDR-TB treatment. Treatment success by programme is aimed only at cure rate, irrespective of socio-economic burden caused due to MDR-TB. More community awareness programmes like Project Axshya are needed to create awareness about TB and MDR-TB.

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