

## Enhanced case finding for tuberculosis through a multi-pronged approach under the Axshya project

**Introduction:** Enhanced case finding (ECF) for tuberculosis has been strongly recommended by the World Health Organization through a steering committee in the Stop Tuberculosis Department in low and middle income countries. Though ECF has been shown to have proven efficacy through mathematical modeling, quality data does not exist for the evaluation of the impact of its implementation on a larger scale.

**Methods:** Enhanced case finding is one of the components of the Axshya project and in the second phase has been approached through the following modalities: 1) Referral of chest symptomatics for sputum examination 2) Intensified outreach activities through Axshya SAMVAD (Sensitization and Advocacy in Marginalised and Vulnerable Areas of the District) 3) Involvement of Rural Healthcare Practitioners (RHCP) and Ayush providers 4) Community meetings with key persons and sensitization 5) Involvement of special groups 6) Facility based and other approaches. The results of ECF under the Axshya project for two quarters from October 2013 to March 2014 among four states, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand and Punjab were analyzed.

**Results:** Through the Axshya project, utilizing the six modalities, sputum collection and transport was performed for 18,461 chest symptomatics. 18,425 chest symptomatics were referred for sputum examination among whom 7,160 (38.86%) had verified investigations at Designated Microscopy Centers. The sputum positive rate was 31.28% with 2,240 positive smears and 2,211 (98.7%) were started on treatment.

**Conclusion:** Case finding and treatment of active cases of tuberculosis are the principal means to reduce the incidence of tuberculosis control programme which is yet to achieve targets in the post millennium development goals era. The effectiveness and detection rate of the various modalities through which ECF can be conducted will direct the large scale implementation and pervasive use of ECF.