

## **A Study on Knowledge, Attitude and Practices Regarding Tuberculosis In an Urban Health and Training Centre, Chennai.**

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### **ABSTRACT**

#### **Background:**

Tuberculosis is one of the most important causes of death worldwide and remains as a major public health problem. It is curable and preventable. Despite the efforts, funds and manpower invested the disease has not been brought under control.

#### **Methods:**

The study was conducted as a Cross sectional, to assess the knowledge, attitude and practices and health seeking behaviour regarding tuberculosis study among outpatients above 20 years of age in the Urban Health and Training Centre, Chennai.

#### **Results:**

A total of 100 patients participated in the study. The age distribution of the participants was between 21 to 65 years. Of them 54% were males and 46% were females. Out of them 72% knew about the disease called tuberculosis and 56% answered tuberculosis is a serious problem.

#### **Conclusions:**

A well planned IEC activities have to be initiated and implemented at the primary health care level on creating awareness regarding tuberculosis and to improve health seeking behaviour as a part of control activities.

**Keywords:** Tuberculosis, Knowledge, Attitude, Practices

### **INTRODUCTION**

**T**uberculosis is one of the most important causes of morbidity and mortality worldwide and remains as a major public health problem. In 2017, 10 million new cases tuberculosis were reported and 1.6 million deaths due to tuberculosis

occurred globally. Tuberculosis is curable and preventable.<sup>1</sup> The mode of transmission from person to person occurs through coughing, sneezing on inhaling the microorganism propelled into the air. About one-quarter of world's population has latent tuberculosis and they have the lifetime risk of 5 to 15% for

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developing the disease.<sup>2</sup> Despite the efforts, funds, manpower and logistics invested, the problem of tuberculosis has not been adequately brought under control and it cannot be done so unless the people are aware of the cause, mode of spread, treatment and prevention of tuberculosis. Hence the study was aimed at assessing the knowledge, attitude and practices among the outpatients attending the Urban Health and Training Centre of a medical college.

## **METHODS :**

The study was conducted as a Cross sectional, to assess the knowledge, attitude and practices and health seeking behaviour regarding tuberculosis study among outpatients above 20 years of age in the Urban Health and Training Centre, Chennai. Data was collected for the period of 1 week among the outpatients who gave consent for the study. Those who were already diagnosed to have tuberculosis with or without taking anti-tuberculosis treatment and those who had hard of hearing were excluded from the study. A total of 100 adult outpatients above 20 years of age participated in the study. The data was collected using a structured questionnaire. It was first developed in English and after validation with the help of experts it was translated to the local language Tamil.

## **RESULTS :**

A total of 100 patients gave consent and participated in the study. The age distribution

of the participants was between 21 to 65 years. The mean age of the participants was 46 years ( $\pm 22$  years). Out of the total participants 54% were males and 46% were females. Among them 18% were illiterates, 22% completed primary school, 48% completed middle school, 9% completed higher secondary school, 3% have done diploma or an equivalent qualification. None of them were graduates. (Table1).

## **Tuberculosis Knowledge :**

Out of the total study participants 72% (95% confidence interval from 63.2% to 80.8%) answered that they are aware of the disease called tuberculosis and 34% of the participants correctly answered tuberculosis is an infectious disease. Among the participants 70% were aware that cough is one of the symptoms of tuberculosis and 45% answered fever as the major symptom (Figure 1). Among the participants, 61% knew that the disease spread through coughing and among close contacts.

Of the total study participants 44% believed that tuberculosis can be prevented and 32% of the participants answered tuberculosis can be cured. Only 8% of the study participants were aware of the exact duration of tuberculosis treatment. Among the study participants 2% were aware of drug resistant tuberculosis and 5% answered tuberculosis treatment is available free of cost in the government health facilities. Of the total study participants, 64% showed their desire to know more about

tuberculosis and 52% answered television programmes were the best mode to create awareness on tuberculosis followed by radio programmes were considered best by 43%, newspapers and other printed materials by 38%. On assessing the associations between various sociodemographic factors with knowledge about tuberculosis, females found to have higher knowledge around 2.7 times than males and knowledge among literates was higher by 3.3 times than illiterates. (Table 2)

### Tuberculosis Attitude and Practices

Among the total study participants 56% answered tuberculosis is a serious problem in our country, 38% answered tuberculosis is more serious than AIDS and 64% answered HIV positive people should be concerned about tuberculosis. Out of the total study participants, 38% said that their relationship would change, if anyone close to them develops tuberculosis and 22% answered that they have the desire to help tuberculosis affected patients but generally prefer to stay away from them.

Out of the total study participants 61% told they seek for allopathic treatment, if they have cough more than 2 weeks and only 2% were aware of DOTS centre. Among the total participants 39% answered they either try any self-medication or medicines from pharmacy before they seek for treatment.

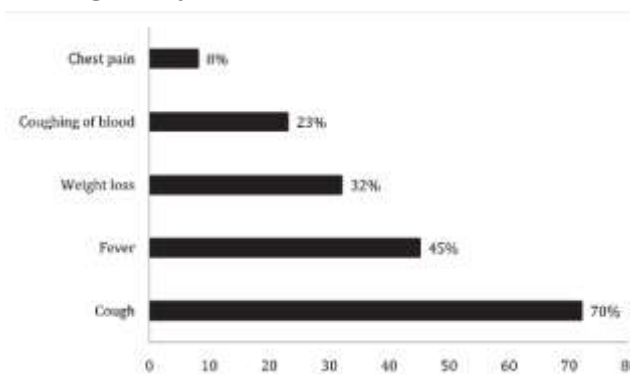
**Table 1: Sociodemographic profile of study population**

Parameter	Percentage
<b>Age Group</b>	
20 - 40	23
40 - 60	48
> 60	29
<b>Sex</b>	
Males	64
Females	46
<b>Socioeconomic status</b>	
Upper	6
Middle	42
Lower	52
<b>Education</b>	
Illiterates	18
Primary school	22
Middle school	48
Higher secondary school	9
Diploma and above	3

**Table 2: Association between certain sociodemographic factors with tuberculosis knowledge.**

Particulars	Tuberculosis knowledge		Odds ratio	p value
	Yes	No		
Females	38	8	2.7	0.014
Males	34	20		
Literates	66	16	3.3	0.012
Illiterates	10	8		

**Figure 1: Knowledge on TB symptoms among study participants**



## DISCUSSION:

India is a country with highest burden of tuberculosis.<sup>3</sup> Control programmes have been initiated and implemented in the last few decades, but the disease burden still persists and takes a new form every time. Poor knowledge among the people, their varying attitude and perception towards the disease, their health seeking behaviour are also the factors that challenge the health system activities on disease control. Hence, IEC activities has to be planned and initiated targeting these aspects.

The current study was conducted among outpatients in an urban primary health centre in Tamilnadu. The study revealed that 72% of the participants ever know about the disease called tuberculosis, 34% participants knew that it is an infectious disease, 71% were aware of the symptoms and 61% knew about its mode of transmission. Among the study participants 44% believe that tuberculosis can be prevented and 32% answered tuberculosis can be cured.

In a similar study by Rajan Rushendar et al reported that 82.5% of the participants were aware about the symptoms of tuberculosis and 74% were aware of the mode of transmission of the disease in their study.<sup>4</sup> In a study by Palash Das et al reported that 91.38% of the participants were aware of the disease tuberculosis, 16.81% knew that it is an infectious disease, 32% were aware of the mode of spread 62% were aware of the

symptoms of tuberculosis.<sup>5</sup> A study by Hossain et al also reported the poor knowledge among participants regarding mode of transmission, curability and availability of treatment.<sup>6</sup> A study by Srreeramareddy et al documented that majority of patients have many misconception about tuberculosis.<sup>7</sup>

Out of the total study participants, 38% said that their relationship would change, if anyone close to them develops tuberculosis and 22% answered that they have the desire to help tuberculosis affected patients but generally prefer to stay away from them. They also mentioned 61% the total study participants will seek for allopathic treatment, if they have cough more than 2 weeks and only 2% were aware of DOTS centre. In a study by Karuna DS et al reported that 73% of their study participants seemed to have attitudes showing discrimination towards tuberculosis patients.<sup>8</sup>

A study by Sharma AK et al reported that the respondents those who had seen tuberculosis campaigns in mass media seemed to have correct information about the disease.<sup>9</sup> Hence, well planned IEC activities have to be initiated and implemented at the primary health care level as a part tuberculosis control activities.

## DECLARATIONS

**Funding :** None

**Conflict of interest :** None

**Ethical approval :** IEC approval obtained

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