



AWARENESS REGARDING VARIOUS ASPECTS OF TB AMONG THE REGISTERED TB PATIENTS AND THEIR CARETAKERS IN TIRUNELVELI DISTRICT

Dr Praveena Daya A

Assistant Professor, Department of Community Medicine, Tirunelveli Medical College, Tirunelveli

Dr Karthikeyan G

Assistant Civil Surgeon, Nanguneri government hospital, Tirunelveli,

ABSTRACT

Background: Tuberculosis continues to be a major public health problem in India. Awareness among the general population plays a main role in early identification, early treatment initiation, compliance to drugs and prevention of transmission of the disease.

Materials and Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted among 25 TB patients registered for DOTS in two Primary Health Centres of Tirunelveli District and one caretaker of each TB patient using a predesigned pretested questionnaire to assess the awareness of TB patients and their caretakers regarding various aspects of TB.

Results: Among the study subjects, 56% were aware of infective etiology of TB, 84% were aware of cough etiquettes, 68% were aware of sputum disposal methods. Awareness regarding importance of compliance to ATT and curability of the disease was found to be less, 28% and 32%. Among the 25 caretakers, only 10 were aware about the correct symptoms of TB, only 11 out of 25 were aware regarding the airborne spread and only 12 out of 25 felt it can be cured with MDT

Conclusion: Awareness regarding causation, mode of spread and curability of TB was low among both patients and their caretakers. Role of health care providers need to be emphasized more in improving awareness among them.

KEYWORDS : Awareness, TB, caretakers, mode of spread

Introduction:

In India, Tuberculosis continues to be a major public health problem. Globally, India accounts for 2.2 million new TB cases out of 9.6 million new cases occurring annually¹. Awareness among the general population plays a main role in early identification, early treatment initiation, compliance to drugs and prevention of transmission of the disease. Studies conducted in India showed very less awareness regarding the etiology, mode of transmission, curability and knowledge regarding treatment facilities among the general population and among TB patients. There is paucity of evidence regarding the awareness of TB patients and their family members regarding the disease causation and transmission in the current geographic region. So the current study is planned to assess the awareness of TB patients and their caretakers regarding various aspects of TB.

Study type: Cross-sectional study

Study duration: January – March 2017

Study population: TB patients registered for DOTS in two Primary Health Centres of Tirunelveli District. Total of 25 TB patients and one caretaker of each TB patient were selected based on convenience sampling and were approached for the study.

Procedure: Study was conducted using a predesigned pretested questionnaire. All the 25 TB patients were approached for the study. The objectives of the study were explained, written informed consent was obtained and confidentiality was assured. Patients and their caretaker were assessed for their awareness in their convenient place. Privacy was maintained during data collection.

Data analysis: The data were entered in Microsoft excel sheet 2010 and analysed using SPSS software version 21. Descriptive analysis was done and results were expressed in prevalence percentages.

Results:

Table.1. Age and Gender distribution of study population (n=25)

S.no	Age category in years	Male	Female	Total
1	20-30	1	1	2
2	31-40	8	4	12
3	41-60	7	4	11
	Total	16	9	25

Among the 25 TB patients studied, 11 belong to 40-60 years age group and 16 out of 25 were males. Among the 25 TB patients, 19 were in Category I treatment, 6 were in Category II treatment.

Table.2. Awareness among TB patients regarding various aspects of TB (n=25)

Variables	Aware N %	Not aware N %
Etiology of the disease	14 (56)	11 (44)
Cough etiquettes	21 (84)	4 (16)
Sputum disposal methods	17 (68)	8 (32)
Importance of compliance to ATT	7 (28)	18 (72)
Curability of the disease	8 (32)	17 (68)

Awareness regarding the importance of compliance to ATT and curability of the disease was found to be less among the study subjects.

Table.3. Awareness among caretakers regarding various aspects of TB (n=25)

Responses about symptoms of TB	Number	Percentage
Only cough	3	12%
Cough and loss of weight	8	32%
Cough, fever and loss of weight	10	40%
Breathlessness/hemoptysis	4	16%
Mode of spread of TB		
Airborne spread of infectious droplets and droplet nuclei containing the Tb bacilli		
Aware	11	44%
Not aware	14	56%
Curability of the disease		
Yes	12	48%
No	10	40%
Not sure	3	12%

Among the 25 caretakers of study subjects, only 10 were aware about the correct symptoms of TB and regarding the mode of spread of TB, 11 out of 25 were aware regarding the airborne spread. Regarding the curability of the disease, only 12 out of 25 felt it can be cured with MDT.

Discussion:

Palanivel C et al² conducted household interviews in an urban slum in South India and revealed that 370 (94%) respondents had heard of TB. Among the respondents, 82% mentioned cough as the symptom of TB. This is more or less similar to the present study, as 84% were aware as cough as one of the symptom of TB.

Study by Jangid VK et al³ among TB patients in a tertiary care hospital in Rajasthan, India, showed that only 19.6% were aware of the infective etiology of the disease. About 50.9% of the patients were aware that it can spread through air while coughing and 81.3% mentioned cough as the most common symptom. The current study showed a higher awareness when compared with this study, as 56% were aware of the infective etiology of the disease and 84% were aware as cough as one of the symptoms of TB.

Study by Jani Y⁴ in Gujarat, India among caregivers of TB patients showed that only 68 (45.0 %) caregivers of patients had knowledge regarding mode of spread of TB infection to others, 89 (58.9%) caregivers of patients knew about curability of the disease. This is high when compared with the present study, as the current study showed 44% and 46% awareness regarding mode of spread and curability of the disease among caretakers.

Conclusion:

Awareness regarding causation, mode of spread and curability of TB was low among both patients and their caretakers. Role of health care providers need to be emphasized more in improving awareness among them. TB patients, their caretakers and general population should be educated through regular health education sessions regarding infective etiology, mode of transmission, importance of compliance to ATT, curability of the disease and other preventive aspects for control and prevention of disease in the community.

REFERENCES

1. Technical and Operational guidelines for TB control in India 2016. Central TB division, Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry Of Health and Family Welfare, India. Available from <https://www.tbcindia.gov.in/showfile.php?lid=31972>. Last accessed on 2nd Feb.18
2. Chinnakali P, Ramakrishnan J, Vasudevan K, Gurumurthy J, Upadhyay RP, Panigrahi KC. Level of awareness about tuberculosis in urban slums: Implications for advocacy and communication strategy planning in the National program. *Lung India* 2013; 30:139-42.
3. Jangid VK, Agrawal NK, Yadav GS, Pandey S, Mathur BB. Knowledge and Awareness of the Tuberculosis in Tuberculosis Patients at a Tertiary Care Centre in North West Rajasthan, India. *Ntl J Community Med* 2016; 7(4):262-268.
4. Jani Y, Bhambhani GD, Thakor N. Knowledge and awareness of tuberculosis in caregivers of paediatric tuberculosis patients of north Gujarat region, India: a cross sectional stud. *Int J Res Med Sci* 2015; 3:3572-5