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Title: A study of tuberculosis in an expatriate Nepalese community in South-East London

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Body: Tuberculosis (TB) amongst immigrant communities in developed countries is a major public health challenge. Nepalese expatriates form such a community of 4000 members in Greenwich, South-East London, one of the largest such communities in London. With TB infecting 45% of the population of Nepal, there are major implications at all levels of healthcare in our area. Aims: To study incident TB cases in Nepalese patients presenting to our service. We hypothesised that differences in presentation, drug resistance, HIV co-infection and treatment completion exist compared to the average UK population with TB. Methods: A retrospective cohort study identified TB cases in Nepali-born patients from 2007 to 2012. Data on disease site, drug-resistance, HIV co-infection and completion rates were taken from hospital records and the London TB Register. Results: We identified 82 cases of TB in Nepali-born patients. Infection sites were similar to national patterns with 52% having pulmonary disease. 25% of pulmonary TB cases were smear positive, less than UK nationwide rates. Resistant strains were seen in 9.5% of patients; 3.5% had multi-drug resistant TB compared to 1% in general UK TB population, none of whom had previously received TB therapy. 1 patient had HIV co-infection. Completion rates were greater than 90% with no apparent relapses. Conclusion: The Nepali population in our area have distinct characteristics compared to the general UK TB population. They have greater drug resistance rates, but rare HIV co-infection and excellent treatment completion rates. We suggest that a targeted campaign in this group could reap huge benefits.