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Title: Incremental yield of first, second and third sputum acid fast bacilli smear by microscopy in the diagnosis of pulmonary tuberculosis among patients referred to St. Paul Hospital Iloilo Public Private Mix directly observed treatment shortcourse

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Body: Study included all TB suspects referred to St Paul Hospital Iloilo Public Private Mix DOTS for sputum microscopy who submitted 3 sputum specimens for 2 days and had at least 1 sputum positive for AFB by smear microscopy. 3292 TB suspects submitted 3 specimens each. 18.62% suspects fulfilled the definition of having at least 1 positive smear result confirmed by 2nd smear examination. 0.27% had at least one positive smear. 93.8% of suspects had their first specimen positive for AFB. 5.55% were positive on the second specimen but not on the first and 0.65% were positive on the third specimen but not on the previous two. The distribution of smear positives among TB suspects in successive specimens and year, in 2003, 116 TB suspects examined of whom, 28.4 % were positive. For 2005, 481 suspects wherein 22.24% were positive. For 2006, 481 suspects, 21% were positive. In 2007, 670 suspects, 17% were positive. In 2008, 734 suspects, 16% were positive. In 2009, 401 suspects and 14% were positive. Result showed reliance on the first specimen detect 85% of the sputum positive patients in 2003, 94% in 2004, 91% in 2005, 98% in 2006, 97% in 2007, 94% in 2008 and 91% in 2009. If the second morning specimen was taken into consideration, then 97% were detected in 2003 and 2004 and 100% were detected from 2005-2009. As shown in this study that almost 100% of cases can be detected with submitting 2 specimens, one of which is the early morning specimen, the DOTS could improve the compliance of sputum submission of the patients as well as reduce the cost.