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Title: High completion rates with directly observed preventive treatment (DOPT) of latent tuberculosis infection (LTBI) in Ethiopian immigrants (EI) to Israel

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Body: Background: Previous studies show rates for completion of treatment of LTBI in immigrants from high TB burden countries between 22%-60%. In a study in southern Israel only 16.4% of EI completed their course of treatment. Since all EI in our catchment area were located in absorption centers, we applied DOPT to all. Each patient was examined by a physician once on evaluation and twice for follow up. Objective: To evaluate the efficacy of a nurse-managed, active outreach DOPT program with minimal physician involvement, in a cohort of immigrants from a high TB burden country. Methodology: A retrospective cohort analysis of 710 medical records of EI at absorption centers in Zefat who had started DOPT for LTBI and were followed up during 2005-2010. Findings: Forty three individuals were excluded due to translocation during treatment and DOPT was stopped prematurely in 4 women who became pregnant. Of the 663 EIs included (359 males), 628 (94.7%) completed treatment. Of the 35 who failed to complete INH therapy, 23 went on to complete 4 months of Rifampin. Thus 98.0% completed LTBI therapy. Demographic factors did not predict treatment completion; however side effects were significantly ($p < 0.001$) associated with non-completion. Conclusions: High completion rates for LTBI were attained among EI in absorption centers, through outreach DOPT. Skilled and dedicated nursing made routine physician involvement redundant. Sponsored by the Israel National Institute for Health Policy Research and by the Israel Lung and Tuberculosis Association. Part of a Thesis submitted for MPH degree, School of Public Health, University of Haifa, Israel.