

European Respiratory Society Annual Congress 2013

Abstract Number: 4487

Publication Number: P2849

Abstract Group: 10.2. Tuberculosis

Keyword 1: MDR-TB **Keyword 2:** Tuberculosis - diagnosis **Keyword 3:** Primary care

Title: Number of tuberculosis (TB) cases reported by primary care physicians (PCPs) in India: Results of a 1-day point prevalence study in 880 urban cities and towns in India

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Body: The burden of multi drug resistant (MDR) TB is increasing in India. Previous studies show that PCPs are poorly versed with standard TB chemotherapeutic regimens. This may be a major factor for the growing prevalence of MDR-TB (Udwadia, Plos One 2010). We aimed to study the prevalence of PCP reported prevalence of TB in India. Methods: 13,225 general practitioners (GPs), general physicians (GenPs) and paediatricians (Ps) from 880 urban cities and towns were randomly selected and invited to participate in a 1-day point prevalence study. All doctors completed a questionnaire based on the ICD-10 classification. They captured age, gender and diagnosis of all patients who visited them on the study day. Clean data was entered in Epi-Info software. Simple descriptive analysis was performed. Results: 7400 physicians (60.6% GPs, 20.8% GenPs, 18.8% Ps) consented and provided clean data of 204,912 patients. Among these, 3719 were reported to have TB. 55.5%, 30.7% and 13.8% of these were seen by GPs, GenPs and Ps respectively. 54% of the GPs were trained in alternative/ complementary forms of medicine (Alt. Med.) & 46% in modern medicine. 65.8% of TB cases were seen in private (pvt) clinics, 2.7% in pvt hospitals and 12.5% in government hospitals. 67.7% of reported TB cases were between the ages of 18-60 yrs. Conclusion: PCPs from pvt clinics see substantially large numbers of TB cases in India (estimated 700,000 TB cases/day). GPs (majority trained in Alt. Med.) see over 50% of these patients. These observations mandate development of appropriate health care strategies to restrict the increasing prevalence of MDR TB.