

Knowledge and Healthcare Seeking Behaviour of Pulmonary Tuberculosis Patients Attending Ilala District Hospital, Tanzania

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Abstract

A cross-sectional study was conducted, based on systematic sampling of consecutive patients with pulmonary tuberculosis (TB) symptoms and who attended the TB clinic for their medication at Ilala District Hospital, Tanzania. The study sample comprised of 153 people who were almost equally distributed among men and women. Three quarters (75%) of the subjects were vaccinated against TB with the majority being 40 years and younger. Half the study subjects were diagnosed to have TB between the 2nd and 4th month after their symptoms appeared. A chest X-ray was used to initiate anti-TB therapy in half the subjects. No consistency was followed in the diagnostic procedures done to confirm the diagnosis. Over half the patients (54.3%) admitted that they openly speak about their illness to others but that only one-third (33.3%) of their friends and family responded in a considerate and sympathetic manner. One-third (36.6%) of the friends and relatives became less friendly and the remaining one-third openly portrayed fear and tried to discriminate the patient even after the commencement of medications. The patients' compliance rate was 100%. The counselling received from the health personnel and the patients' own motivations to improve their health, was the main driving force in seeking treatment and taking daily medication. Discrimination against TB patients by relatives and friends is likely to hinder positive health seeking behaviour and thus impede control of this disease.