

The impact of COVID-19 on Tuberculosis detection and treatment at healthcare facilities in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: A multi-centre study

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Ethiopia is among the high TB burden countries and COVID-19 has overtaken every other health issue in resource-limited settings. Its impacts on TB care include increasing undiagnosed TB patients, medication adherence and increase resistance. Thus, assessing the impacts of COVID-19 on TB care is paramount to implement a unique program for the management of TB during COVID-19 pandemic. A mixed study design was employed among randomly selected 10 health centers and 3 hospitals in Addis Ababa Ethiopia. The study period was March 4/2020 to December 4/2020 while (March 4/2019 to December 4/2019) was used as a baseline. The quantitative data was collected from TB patients' medical registry, laboratory registry and treatment follow-up chart. The qualitative data was collected using in-depth interviews.

TB detection and the number of positive results were significantly decreased after the pandemic in all study sites. Thus, bacteriological TB test was decreased from 5837 to 2126 patients and TB positive cases was decreased from 500 patients to 218 that results a decline by 63.6% and 56.4% respectively. The total TB patients was also decreased from 1431 to 1051 which declines by 26.6% whereas, the proportion of extra pulmonary TB was increased by 10%. The treatment outcomes of TB was also slightly decreased during the pandemic thus, the cure rate was (92.52% vs 90.33%), death rate (2.96% vs 3.3%) and loss of follow-up (2.26% vs 3.07%) medication adherence (96.9% vs 92.7%). Fear of COVID-19 infection and isolation decrease healthcare seeking behaviours of patients and create a negative perception and practice among health care workers. Moreover, lack of personal protective equipment, lack of rapid diagnostic test tools, resemblance in clinical presentation and a shift of policy by government were the major challenges mentioned to affect the TB care during the pandemic. All these might increase undetected TB, leading to ongoing TB transmission, drug resistance and mortality. Therefore, collaborative measures should be implemented and all TB care services should be resumed in parallel to COVID-19 control.

Biography

Beshir Bedru Nasir is a young clinical pharmacist, Lecturer and researcher at Addis Ababa University. He is an expertise on medication use Evaluation, monitoring treatment outcomes, optimization of medication selection and medication adherence to treatments. He has conducted several researches especially in epilepsy management in Ethiopia to optimize treatment outcomes of chronic diseases. Moreover, he has been teaching pharmacotherapy and provides clinical pharmacy services in collaboration to other healthcare providers at Tikur Anbessa Specialized Hospital. He is also interested to conducted researches on pharmaco-economics of different treatment regimens for developing countries like Ethiopia.

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