

What Are the Factors Influencing Tuberculosis Contacts Turning Up for Their Screening Appointments?

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: Contact screening is an essential component of tuberculosis control in Malaysia to identify individuals with tuberculosis and latent infection with *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. Despite the government's effort in reducing transmission among TB patient's relatives and friend, only few turn up for their screening appointments. The aim of this study is to determine the prevalence of tuberculosis contacts attending screening and the factors influencing them. **METHODS:** A cross-sectional study based on identified and registered tuberculosis contacts in Marang district from year 2013 to 2017. **RESULTS:** Among 910 tuberculosis contacts selected, 77% attended the initial screening, 46% three months after initial screening, 16% after six months and 2.3% two years later. The fourth tuberculosis screening appointment has the highest absenteeism which is 97%. Smokers and those having co-morbid such as diabetes and hypertension has higher percentage of attending screening appointments compared to others (66%). We found that those staying far from health facilities (81%) statistically significant in attending at least one screening visit as compared to those living near them (73%) or staying in remote areas (41%) Among contacts who were screened, only 0.4% has yielded positive test. **DISCUSSION:** This study shows that tuberculosis contacts are not consistent in attending their screening appointments. Among the various factors identified for their attendance are distance from home to the nearest health facility, occupation and co-morbid. This study demonstrates that TB screening activities among our population need to be strengthened to achieve the success of our National TB control programme.

KEYWORDS: tuberculosis, contact screening, defaulting appointment

What Causes Low Yield Among Pulmonary Tuberculosis Smear Positive Contacts in Kuantan? - Key for Improvement

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: Contacts who are exposed to infective pulmonary tuberculosis (PTB) patients are at substantial risk of active tuberculosis (TB) and latent TB infection (LTBI). The prevalence of active TB among contacts to PTB patients was 3.5-5.5%. The incidence of active TB is highest in the first year and remains above background incidence for at least 5 yrs after exposure to a patient with TB. The objective of this study is to determine the causes of low yield among PTB smear positive contacts in Kuantan. **METHODS:** We conducted a cross sectional study consists of hundred PTB smear positive cases in Kuantan in the year 2018. Data were obtained from the electronic disease registration system (MyTB) and from patient's record. Data was analysed using SPSS. **RESULTS:** From hundred index cases, 994 contacts identified. The overall yield for active TB among contacts was 0.22%. The defaulter rate for first screening was 9%, 84% at second screening, 90% at third screening and 94% at fourth screening. Only 38% of contacts classified as household contacts, 54% were occupational contacts, 7% were other relatives while 0.5% was social contacts. **CONCLUSIONS:** Low yield of active TB among PTB smear positive contacts contributed by high defaulter rate and lack of contact prioritization. Pertaining to its highly contagious nature, adequate contact investigation and management is mandatory for all PTB smear positive cases. Early diagnosis of active TB among contacts lead to less severe disease and stop further transmission of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* to others.

KEYWORDS: Active tuberculosis, defaulter rate, household contacts, occupational contacts