

A study of the factors influencing tb contacts' attendance for screening appointments

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Contact screening is crucial for TB control in Malaysia, aiming to detect TB and latent infection among contacts of TB patients. However, attendance at screening appointments remains low despite government efforts to reduce transmission among TB patients' contacts. **Objective:** This study aims to determine the prevalence of TB contacts attending screening, and the factors influencing them to completion. **Methods:** This study comprised two parts. First, a retrospective study data analysed from the Malaysian Tuberculosis (MyTB) database, encompassing all TB contacts in the Marang district from January 2013 to December 2018. The second part involved a descriptive and analytical cross-sectional study on knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions (KAP) related to retention in care. Univariate and multivariate regression tests were employed to assess the associations between questionnaire responses and screening completion. **Results:** Out of 5193 identified contacts, only 15% completed screening appointments. Attendance dropped from 82% at the first appointment to 15% at the fourth. 4% of those screened tested positive for TB. Factors associated with higher completion rates included living within three km of the clinic, having less committed jobs, being a close contact, being single, perceiving screening as beneficial, and visiting the clinic 3-4 weeks after symptoms. Close contacts, single status, and delayed clinic visits remained significant predictors in multivariate analysis. **Conclusion:** This study pinpoints the factors affecting TB contact screening attendance in Malaysia. The findings will hopefully guide stakeholders and healthcare providers to enhance the screening system, supporting the Health Ministry's goal to end TB by 2030