

2nd Global Public Health Congress

March 25-26, 2019 | Amsterdam, Netherlands

A study of the social stigma of the patients receiving DOTS under RNTCP program in Bihar, India

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Background: Acceptance of DOTS strategy in the Indian RNTCP has certainly brought encouraging success in the management of TB cases within the country. However, there are challenges to be met in the program implementation, before the RNTCP objectives are finally realized. One such challenge is the social stigma associated with the TB patients. The study attempts to find out the concerns of the TB patients who receive the DOTS within the same community.

Objective: The objective of this study is to know the major concerns of the TB patients who are receiving the DOTS from the DOTS providers within the same community/village.

Methods & Materials: An interview was conducted of 256 patients who are receiving the DOTS within their communities/villages across the five development blocks of Munger district of Bihar.

Results: Of all the TB patients who were interviewed, 53 percent reported that they wanted to hide from the community that they have TB, but they have to reveal it to others about their disease because they have to take the DOTS from the providers within the village. Of all those interviewed, 47 percent said that taking DOTS had a negative impact on them with respect to social discrimination within the community. Fifty three (53) percent reported that because of DOTS, several people in the community knew that they have TB which led to the discrimination.

Conclusion: Notions restricting the acceptance of TB patients are still prevalent in the minds of people and require a propagation of frequent IEC campaigns to remove superstitions amongst the people.

Notes: