

## Abstract Submission for ILC 2013

### *Ethnic minorities*

ILC2013-1452

#### **LEPROSY CONTROL IN TRIBAL POPULATION: HOW TO OVERCOME THE HIDDEN CHALLENGES?**

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**Preferred Presentation Method:** Oral or Eposter

**Would you like to be considered for the Young Scientist Award?:** No

**Introduction:** Tribal population in India generally suffers from lack of access to health services and is not a part of the mainstream developmental activities. Their health indicators are worse than the general population. In 2011 about 15.83% of new leprosy cases were reported in India belongs to Scheduled Tribe (ST) population. The aim of this case study is to report how different stakeholders worked together to identify a large cluster of leprosy cases in a tribal population in Tamil Nadu one of the southern states of India.

**Methods:** Retrospective construction of events and efforts involved in identifying the leprosy cases in a tribal population living in hard to reach mountainous area.

**Results:** Anjetty is a tribal area with 15000 population spread in nine mountains. Initially seven new leprosy cases self reported to the nearest Primary Health Centre in 2011. The Medical Officer and the health supervisor of the health centre reported to the district leprosy programme officer. The district team conducted a week long campaign with a team of doctors, health staff and local volunteers financially supported by a local corporate.

The team identified 21 new leprosy cases during the campaign. The major challenge was monthly follow up. The district team took support of local NGO involved in leprosy control programme for monthly follow up and supply of MDT for patients under treatment. The team identified eleven new leprosy cases during follow up visits and most of these new cases were self reported to the team during IEC. The programme officer and the NGO were very keen to organize one more campaign with the help of health staff, women self help groups, local volunteers and students from a social science college. They were divided into five groups to cover five mountains over one week. The team identified eighteen new leprosy cases in second campaign. It was not the end for reporting new cases, a few more new leprosy cases were identified during the follow up visits. A total of 72 new leprosy cases were identified, among them 28 were Multi-bacillary leprosy cases and three of them had deformity at the time of diagnosis.

**Conclusion:** The case study illustrates how different stakeholders can work together to reach the underserved population and overcome the hidden challenges in leprosy.

**Disclosure of Interest:** None Declared