

The effect of triage in improving screening of TB symptomatic and sputum positive case detection in crowded outpatient settings – Experience from 164 Primary Health Centres in Bihar, India.

Background: In 2013, out of the estimated global annual incidence of 8.6 million TB cases, 2.3 million were in India. Bihar is second most populous state in India; Revised National TB Control Programme was implemented in the state in 2005. One of the major challenges faced by the state in TB control is poor case detection. Though it is estimated 203 TB cases of all types per 100000 populations, the State is not able to achieve even 35% of the target set by the programme. One of the main reasons was poor health infrastructure; each primary health centre covers a population range from 150000 to 200000. Health facilities are generally overcrowded with patients doctors may not have enough time to take complete history from the patients attending outpatient clinics and many TB symptomatic cases can be miss the opportunity to undergo screening for TB.

Intervention: Damien Foundation India Trust is supporting Revised National TB Control Programme in 15 districts with less than 30 New Sputum Positive case notifications per 100,000 population. One of the strategies to improve case notification is to promote triage approach for identification of TB symptomatic in crowded outpatient clinics at Primary Health Centres. Out of 293 microscopy centres in 15 districts, 209 DMCs were selected to implement triage approach based on high patient load. Lab Technicians were trained to visit the waiting area every hour and segregate patients with cough for sputum examination with the approval of doctor. By the end of 2014, complete data was available from 164 (78%) DMCs. The data was also collected for 2012 and 2013 from same microscopy centres for comparison.

Results: There is significant improvement seen both in screening of TB symptomatic and sputum positive case detection in 2014 compared to previous two years. It was observed that screening of TB symptomatic increased by 18% and 25% in 2014 compared to 2012 and 2013. Sputum positive case detection increased by 30% and 37% in 2014 compared to 2012 and 2013.

Conclusion: Implementation of triage approach can improve both screening of TB symptomatic and sputum positive case detection in crowded outpatient clinics.

