



EXPLORING THE ACCEPTABILITY OF TUBERCULOSIS PREVENTIVE TREATMENT FOR HOUSEHOLD CONTACTS IN MOULVIBAZAR DISTRICT, BANGLADESH: AN IMPLEMENTATION RESEARCH

Background: Preventing Tuberculosis (TB) by preventive treatment is a crucial step toward eliminating TB. In recent years, several countries, including Bangladesh, have updated national programs to bring household contacts under TB Preventive Treatment (TPT) coverage. However, research on context-specific barriers and facilitators regarding TPT acceptability is scarce.

Objectives: This study aimed to explore the acceptability of TPT for household contacts of TB patients from both the health providers' and the contacts' perspectives.

Method: This implementation research followed a convergent mixed method approach guided by the TPT care cascade framework. The setting was Moulvibazar district, Bangladesh. Secondary quantitative data, obtained from the National TB Control Programme (NTP), Bangladesh, were used to determine the percentage of people completing each step of the cascade through descriptive analysis. The qualitative part included a thematic analysis that focused on explaining the factors influencing the high or low completion of those steps. Interview participants were chosen through purposive sampling.

Results: From April 2022 to December 2022, 7,297 household contacts were identified and 3,105 (43%) of them initiated TPT. Preventive treatment was less acceptable to the contacts. They questioned the reasoning for treatment for 'no disease' and were concerned about drug side effects and possible stigma. Counseling contacts before starting TPT, family support, fear of TB, free healthcare services, and outreach programs were identified as facilitators. Health providers considered TPT effective and necessary for TB control. However, infrastructural inadequacy, including medicine stock-out and unavailability of investigation facilities, and shortage of skilled staff were hindering the implementation process.

Conclusion: Contact-oriented strategies and capacity building at the health facility are likely to improve the TPT outcome in Bangladesh.

Keywords: *TPT, tuberculosis preventive treatment, implementation research, acceptability, household contacts, Bangladesh*