

Management of tuberculosis by public and private health care providers in Laukkai Township, China border area, Northern Shan State, Myanmar

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Abstract

Tuberculosis (TB) management in Myanmar China border, a high TB burden area, was a knowledge gap. A cross-sectional mixed methods study was conducted in hard-to-reach high TB burden Laukkai Township, Northern Shan State during 2012 and 2013. It was aimed to identify management of TB among public and private health care providers in the study area. A total of 14 Basic Health Staff (BHSs) who had involved in TB management and 37 private providers (34 General Practitioners (GPs) and 3 providers from Asia Harm Reduction Network (AHRN)) were included in the study. Majority of the GPs (67.7%) were Chinese speaking providers. Most GPs were laboratory technician, nurses and traditional medical healers and a few were medical doctors. About 90% of GPs had never received TB training provided by National Tuberculosis Program (NTP). The overall knowledge score on TB management was significantly lower among GPs (14.0 ± 10.2) than that of BHS (30 ± 6.5). Records keeping, availability of referral forms, patient record books, treatment card and TB information, education and communication materials were almost not available at GPs. Referral form was rarely used. Providers from AHRN followed the NTP guidelines in the management of TB. Diagnosis and treatments of TB by GPs was not in line with NTP guidelines and loose anti-TB medicines were commonly used. However, GPs were perceived as important partners in TB control given the reasons of being the first care givers, easy accessibility, and having no language barrier in communicating with TB patients. GPs were also willing to collaborate with NTP. Holding continuous medical education programme and providing updated TB management information in local language were suggested means of collaboration. In conclusion, management of TB among GPs in Laukkai

Township was not in line with NTP guidelines and providing them the updated TB management information in local language will be helpful. Close collaboration between public and private providers could provide better TB management in Laukkai Township.

Key words: Tuberculosis, TB provider, TB management, border area, Myanmar, China