

# **Knowledge of tuberculosis patients and their willingness to participate in TB control in Laukkai and Kunlon Townships, Northern Shan State: A mixed-method study**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Previous treated tuberculosis (TB) patient's contribution in TB care is substantial. Information related to TB patients' willingness to participate in TB control in high TB burden townships, Laukkai and Kunlon, Northern Shan State, was not known. A mixed-methods study was conducted in 2012 with 100 TB patients who took treatment at Township Health Departments of the study townships and drop-in center of Asia Harm Reduction Network (AHRN) in Laukkai to disclose the knowledge of TB patients and their willingness to participate in TB control. A total of 24 individual depth interviews were also included to understand reasons for their willingness to participate. Three-fourths of the participants were from Laukkai Township and one-fourth was from Kunlon Township. Half of the participants took treatment at Township Health Departments and half from Asia Harm Reduction Network drop-in center at Laukkai. About one-fifth (18%) of the participants had history of previous TB treatment. More than one-fourth (28%) of the participants were afraid of TB stigmatization, 94% took the drugs without a Direct Observed Treatment Short-course (DOT) provider, 66% had low knowledge level on TB. Participants who took anti-TB at AHRN has a higher median knowledge score compared to those who took treatment at Township Health Departments, 21 vs 18 with Interquartile Range (IQR) of 4 each, ( $p < 0.001$ ). The majority of participants were willing to participate in sharing TB information, help TB patients getting anti-TB drugs at the health facilities on behalf of the severely ill patients or patient without a helping hand in the community during their follow up period, and support a newly treated TB patient for adherence. Most of them described that the information would be based on their experiences of signs and symptoms they had suffered, the investigations had taken for diagnosis, treatment center where they had received the anti-TB drugs freely, and about the follow-up they had. In conclusion, TB patients were willing to participate in TB control. However, knowledge on TB was low, TB stigmatization and taking treatment without being observed was high. It is recommended that promoting TB patients' knowledge on TB, desensitization of TB stigmatization and ensuring DOT among TB patients is highly required in the study townships.

Key words: Tuberculosis, knowledge, willingness of TB patients, border area, high TB burden country