Understanding and Addressing the Tuberculosis Notification Gap in Nepal

Authors : Lok Raj Joshi, Naveen Prakash Shah, Sharad Kumar Sharma, I. Ratna Bhattarai, Rajendra Basnet, Deepak Dahal, Bahagwan Maharjan, Seraphine Kaminsa

Abstract : Context: Tuberculosis (TB) is a significant health issue in Nepal, a country with a high burden of the disease. Despite efforts to control TB, there is still a gap in the notification of TB cases, which hinders effective control and treatment. This paper aims to address this notification gap and proposes strategies to improve TB control in Nepal. Research Aim: The aim of this research is to understand and address the tuberculosis notification gap in Nepal. The focus is on enhancing the healthcare system, involving the private sector and communities, raising awareness, and addressing social determinants to achieve sustainable TB control. Methodology: The research methodology involved a review of existing epidemiological data and research studies related to TB in Nepal. Additionally, consultation with an expert group from the TB control program in Nepal provided insights into the current state of TB control and challenges in addressing the notification gap. Findings: The findings reveal that only 55% of TB cases were reported in 2022, indicating a significant notification gap. Of the reported cases, only 32% and 19% were referred by the private sector and community, respectively. Furthermore, 20% of diagnosed cases were not treated in the initial phase. The estimated number of cases of multidrug-resistant TB (MDR TB) was 2,800, suggesting a low diagnosis rate. Among the diagnosed MDR TB cases, only 60% were receiving treatment. Additionally, it was observed that 20% of diagnosed MDR TB cases were from India and not enrolling in TB treatment in Nepal, indicating a high rate of defaulters. Theoretical Importance: The study highlights the importance of adopting a holistic strategy to address the notification gap in TB cases in Nepal. It emphasizes the need to enhance healthcare infrastructure, raise awareness, involve the private sector and local communities, establish effective methods to trace initial defaulters, implement TB interventions in border regions, and mitigate the social stigma associated with the disease. Data Collection and Analysis Procedures: Data for this study was collected through a review of existing epidemiological data and research studies. The data were then analyzed to identify patterns, trends, and gaps in TB case notification in Nepal.

Keywords : TB, tuberculosis, private sector, community, migrants, nepal

Conference Title : ICADT 2023 : International Conference on Antimycobacterial Drugs and Tuberculosis
Conference Location : New York, United States
Conference Dates : August 10-11, 2023