

## Psychosocial Challenges of Multi-Drug Resistant Tuberculosis (MDR-TB) Patients at St. Peter TB Specialized Hospital in Addis Ababa

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**Abstract :** Multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) is defined as resistant to at least Rifampicin and Isoniazide: the most two powerful TB drugs. It is a leading cause of high rates of morbidity and mortality, and increasing psychosocial challenges to patients, especially when co-infected with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). Ethiopia faces the highest rates of MDR-TB infection in the world. Objectives: The main objective of this study was to identify the psychosocial challenges of MDR-TB patients, to investigate the extent of the psychosocial challenges on (self-esteem, depression, and stigma) that MDR-TB patients encounter, to examine whether there is a sex difference in experiencing psychosocial challenges and assess the counseling needs of MDR-TB patients. Methodology: A cross-sectional study was conducted at St. Peter TB Specialized Hospital, Addis Ababa on 40 patients (25 males and 15 females) who are hospitalized for treatment. The patients were identified by using purposive sampling and made fill a questionnaire measuring their level of self-esteem, depression and stigma. Besides, data were collected from 16 participants, 28 care providers and 8 guardians, using semi-structured interview. The obtained data were analyzed using SPSS statistical program, descriptive statistics, independent t-test, and qualitative description. Results and Discussion: The results of the study showed that the majority (80%) of the respondents had suffered psychological challenges and social discriminations. Thus, the significance of MDR-TB and its association with HIV/AIDS problems is considered. Besides the psychosocial challenges, various aggravating factors such as length of treatment, drug burden and insecurity in economy together highly challenges the life of patients. In addition, 60% of participants showed low level of self-esteem. The patients also reported that they experienced high self-stigma and stigma by other members of the society. The majority of the participants (75%) showed moderate and severe level of depression. In terms of sex there is no difference between the mean scores of males and females in the level of depression and stigmatization by others and by themselves. But females showed lower level of self-esteem than males. The analysis of the t-test also shows that there were no statistically significant sex difference on the level of depression and stigma. Based on the qualitative data MDR-TB patients face various challenges in their life sphere such as: Psychological (depression, low self value, lowliness, anxiety), social (stigma, isolation from social relations, self-stigmatization,) and medical (drug side effect, drug toxicity, drug burden, treatment length, hospital stays). Recommendations: Based on the findings of this study possible recommendations were forwarded: develop and extend MDR-TB disease awareness creation through by media (printing and electronic), school net TB clubs, and door to door community education. Strengthen psychological wellbeing and social relationship of MDR-TB patients using proper and consistent psychosocial support and counseling. Responsible bodies like Ministry of Health (MOH) and its stakeholders and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) need to assess the challenges of patients and take measures on this pressing issue.

**Keywords :** psychosocial challenges, counseling, multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB), tuberculosis therapy

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