

## Out of Pocket Costs for Patients with Tuberculosis in Colombia: Evidence from Three Metropolitan Areas

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**Abstract :** Objectives: Economic analyses of tuberculosis control interventions are usually focused on the payer's perspective. To assess the overall economic impact of the disease, out-of-pocket and indirect costs are also required. This research is aimed to estimate overall economic impact under DOTS-strategy (Directly Observed Therapy Short Course). Methods: A cross-sectional survey of 91 adult tuberculosis patients in treatment for at least two months was conducted from the society perspective. A standardized questionnaire was used in three different cities of Colombia: Medellin (poverty is 17.7%), Monteria (poverty is 36.9%) and Quibdó (poverty is 51.2%). Costs were converted to 2013 USD and categorized into two periods: diagnostics phase and treatment. Results: The median cost during diagnostics was 13\$ ( $\pm$ SD 9.5). The median monthly patient out-of-pocket costs during treatment were 32\$ ( $\pm$ SD 6.8), equivalent to 17% of patient's median monthly income, estimated in 186\$ ( $\pm$ SD 23). Costs recorded in Medellin were 47\$ in Monteria was 18\$ and in Quibdó was 13\$. Conclusion: Patient costs under DOTS strategy are high even when services are provided free of charge. The creation or strengthening of community-based treatment supervisors could greatly impact costs of tuberculosis and lower drop-outs.

**Keywords :** tuberculosis, costs and cost analysis, health promotion, Colombia

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