

A Delphi Study to Build Consensus for Tuberculosis Control Guideline to Achieve Who End Tb 2035 Strategy

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Abstract : Introduction: Studies for TB control in intermediate tuberculosis burden countries (IBCs) comprise a relatively small proportion in TB control literature, as compared to the effort put in high and low burden counterparts. It currently lacks of consensus in the optimal weapons and strategies we can use to combat TB in IBCs; guidelines of TB control are inadequate and thus posing a great obstacle in eliminating TB in these countries. To fill-in the research and services gap, we need to summarize the findings of the effort in this regard and to seek consensus in terms of policy making for TB control, we have devised a series of scoping and Delphi studies for these purposes. Method: The scoping and Delphi studies are conducted in parallel to feed information for each other. Before the Delphi iterations, we have invited three local experts in TB control in Hong Kong to participate in the pre-assessment round of the Delphi study to comments on the validity, relevance, and clarity of the Delphi questionnaire. Result: Two scoping studies, regarding LTBI control in health care workers in IBCs and TB control in elderly of IBCs respectively, have been conducted. The result of these two studies is used as the foundation for developing the Delphi questionnaire, which tapped on seven areas of question, namely: characteristics of IBCs, adequacy of research and services in LTBI control in IBCs, importance and feasibility of interventions for TB control and prevention in hospital, screening and treatment of LTBI in community, reasons of refusal to/ default from LTBI treatment, medical adherence of LTBI treatment, and importance and feasibility of interventions for TB control and prevention in elderly in IBCs. The local experts also commented on the two scoping studies conducted, thus act as the sixth phase of expert consultation in Arksey and O'Malley framework of scoping studies, to either nourish the scope and strategies used in these studies or to supplement ideas for further scoping or systematic review studies. In the subsequent stage, an international expert panel, comprised of 15 to 20 experts from IBCs in Western Pacific Region, will be recruited to join the two-round anonymous Delphi iterations. Four categories of TB control experts, namely clinicians, policy makers, microbiologists/ laboratory personnel, and public health clinicians will be our target groups. A consensus level of 80% is used to determine the achievement of consensus on particular issues. Key messages: 1. Scoping review and Delphi method are useful to identify gaps and then achieve consensus in research. 2. Lots of resources are put in the high burden countries now. However, the usually neglected intermediate-burden countries with TB is an indispensable part for achieving the ambitious WHO End TB 2035 target.

Keywords : delphi questionnaire, tuberculosis, WHO, latent TB infection

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