

## Health Literacy and Knowledge Related to Tuberculosis among Outpatients at a Referral Hospital in Lima, Peru

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**Abstract :** Background: Tuberculosis (TB) case detection in Peru relies on passive case finding. This strategy relies on the assumption that the community is aware that a persistent cough is a possible symptom of TB and that formal health care needs to be sought. Despite its importance, health knowledge specific to TB is underexplored in Peru. This study aimed to assess health literacy and level of TB knowledge among outpatients attending a referral hospital in Lima, Peru. The goal was to ascertain knowledge gaps in key areas relating to TB, to identify and prioritize subgroups for intervention, and to provide insight for policy and community interventions considering health literacy. Methods: An observational cross-sectional study was conducted using a survey to measure sociodemographic factors, tuberculosis knowledge, and health literacy. Bivariate and Multivariate logistic regression was performed to study the associations between variables and to account for potential confounders. The study was conducted at Hospital Cayetano Heredia in Lima, Peru from June - August 2017. Results: 272 participants were included in the analysis. 57.7% knew someone who had had TB before, 9% had had TB in the past. Two weeks a cough was correctly identified as a symptom that could be TB by 69.1%. High TB knowledge was found among 149 (54.8%) participants. High health literacy was found among 193 (71.0%) participants. Health literacy and TB knowledge were not significantly associated (OR 0.9 (95%CI 0.5-1.5)). After controlling for sex, age, district, education, health insurance, frequency of hospital visits and previous TB diagnosis: High TB knowledge was associated with knowing someone with TB (aOR 2.7 (95%CI 1.6-4.7)) and being a public transport driver, (aOR 0.2 (95%CI 0.05-0.9)). Not being poor was the single factor associated with high health literacy (aOR 3.8 (95%CI 1.6-8.9)). Conclusions: TB knowledge was fair, though 30% did not know the most important symptom of TB. Tailoring educational strategies to risk groups may enhance passive case detection especially amongst transport workers in Lima, Peru.

**Keywords :** health literacy, Peru, tuberculosis, tuberculosis knowledge

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