

Availability of TB Infection Control Plans at Rural Hospitals of South Africa

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Abstract : Background: In Limpopo province the rate of new tuberculosis (TB) cases increase daily. The Infection Control (IC) plan is one of the essential actions for TB IC. This study aimed to establish the availability of these plans at health care facilities. Objectives: The objectives were to explore and describe the awareness and knowledge of health care workers (HCWs) of the availability and content of TB IC plan; and to identify the role of infection control committees from the perspective of HCWs. Method: A qualitative approach using a cross-sectional descriptive design was adopted. The target population was all HCWs from the seven hospitals of Vhembe district. A purposive sampling approach was used to select 57 participants. The approval to conduct this study was obtained from the relevant authorities and participants. Data were collected through seven focus group discussions comprising five to 10 members. An unstructured discussion guide was used to collect data, and an open-coding method was used to analyse the data. Lincoln and Guba's criteria ensured trustworthiness of the study findings. Results: Findings revealed that HCWs were not aware of the availability and the information contained in the TB IC plans. No person was designated as TB IC officer at hospital level. There was lack of a TB IC Committee and teams as well as ineffective utilisation of those that did exist. Conclusions: It was concluded that if the TB IC plans are not available at health care facilities, then the TB IC practices implemented by HCWs vary, resulting in TB nosocomial infection transmission. It was recommended that the World Health Organisation's TB IC plans be adopted and implemented in Vhembe district.

Keywords : health care workers' awareness, health care workers' knowledge, availability of TB infection control plans, rural hospitals

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