

Challenges to Tuberculosis Control in Angola: The Narrative of Medical Professionals

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Abstract : Background: There is a tuberculosis (TB) epidemic in Angola that has been getting worse for more than a decade despite the active implementation of the DOTS strategy. The aim of this study was to directly interrogate healthcare workers involved in TB control on what they consider to be the drivers of the TB epidemic in Angola. Methods: Twenty four in-depth qualitative interviews were conducted with medical staff working in this field in the provinces of Luanda and Benguela. Results: The healthcare professionals see the migrant working poor as a particular problem for the control of TB. These migrants are constructed as 'Rural People' and are seen as non-compliant and late-presenting. This is a stigmatized and marginal group contending with the additional stigma associated with TB infection. The healthcare professionals interviewed also see the interruption of treatment and self medication generally as a better explanation for the TB epidemic than urbanization or lack of medication. Conclusions: The local narrative is in contrast to previous explanations used elsewhere in the developing world. To be effective policy must recognize the local issues of the migrant workforce, interruption of treatment and the stigma associated with TB in Angola.

Keywords : Africa, Angola, migrants, qualitative, research, tuberculosis

Conference Title : ICT 2018 : International Conference on Tuberculosis

Conference Location : London, United Kingdom

Conference Dates : May 14-15, 2018