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Understanding Tuberculosis services in prisons of Punjab – India**Sukhwinder Singh***Research Scholar, India*

Statement of the Problem: Globally, Tuberculosis is ranked above HIV/AIDS as single most infectious disease with over 10 million developing disease annually. Prisons inmates are one among the vulnerable populations at risk of TB. The National Strategic plans of India – which is one of the high-TB burden countries; the strategies are designed to increase access to screening, diagnostic and treatment services. There is limited evidence on number of inmates on TB treatment. The aim of this study is to understand the various modalities adopted by state to ensure TB services are available to prison inmates.

Methodology & theoretical orientation: National TB Elimination programmer (NTEP) reports all TB patients through web portal “Nikshay”. From this portal we analyzed the data for the period Jan 2019 to Dec 2019 to understand the diagnostic and treatment service availability. We also discussed with key stakeholders about implementation of strategies. The information regarding the availability of infrastructures was also collected to corroborate with notifications.

Findings: The nine central prisons had a total inmate's strength of 19,562. Although all prisons had a medical officer; only 56% of them were trained in NTEP. Only two facilities had a designated microscopy center and one among them had Chest X-ray facility. Out of the 102 TB patients reported 91% were male and with an average age of 33 years. 76% of TB patients are bacteriologically diagnosed and 46% were diagnosed through newer diagnostic technique; GeneXpert. Most of them were pulmonary TB patients (87%) and samples were tested at district tuberculosis center.

Conclusion: The efforts of NTEP to increase access to TB services in prisons of Punjab are evident from the current study. Programmer has adopted various modalities proposed in the national strategic plan like provision of sample transportation, upfront GeneXpert tests, counselling services through increased co-ordination with prison authorities.

Biography

Mr. Sukhwinder Singh is a dedicated, innovative and results-oriented Community Development Programme Specialist, leveraging knowledge and abilities gained over 14-years of cumulative experience within the National and International NGOs especially in the field Advocacy, Training, MCH/RCH, HCV, Tuberculosis, HIV, Project Management and managing NGO partnerships including capacity building. He has experience of working with NGOs and leading a team of professionals. During Covid pandemic he has provided teleconsultation to the patients.