Engaging AYUSH health institutions in accelerating TB case finding efforts in Himachal Pradesh, India.

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Type selection

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Track selection

Track: E1: Civil society, advocacy and community engagement

Title

Public Health Practice Abstract Text

Background and challenges to implementation: AYUSH, an acronym for Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa-Rigpa and Homeopathy represents the alternative systems of medicine recognized by Government of India and is preferred by patients as the first point of care for seeking health services. Since 2019, Himachal state TB program in collaboration with AYUSH health institutions (AHIs) have collaborated to improve case finding activities across the State through the network of AHIs. This cross-sectional study was conducted with the objective of assessing the impact of AHIs on TB case finding efforts in the state of Himachal Pradesh.

Intervention or response: Department of AYUSH was formally included in state and district level TB elimination committees with nodal officers identified at both levels since 2019. Reporting mechanisms and TB presumptive referral linkages were established. 11 TB diagnostic centres and 1 NAAT laboratory was established in AHIs where infrastructure facility from allopathic system of medicine was unreachable due to hilly terrain. Cascade trainings on TB program guidelines was conducted at different levels of AHIs. The impact on case finding was assessed since its collaboration from 2019 for the state.

Results/Impact: In 2022, a total 7473 presumptive TB cases were identified at AHI TB NAAT lab which was 2.3% of the total presumptive TB examination rate of the state. There were 206 (2.7%) TB cases who have been diagnosed through patient referrals from AHIs. This contributes to 1.3% of the total TB notification rate of the state. 584 new cases have been diagnosed in TB diagnostic centres established in AHIs since its collaboration with TB program.

Conclusions: Engagement with AYUSH department has shown significant impact on TB case finding in the state as a new partner for the program. Strong policy inducements which promote partnership with alternate system of medicine should be given additional weightage while formulating end-TB strategies in hard-to-reach areas.

Summary

Summary: Alternate system of medicine such as AYUSH health institutions (AHI) in India are often the first point of contact for the rural communities seeking health care. Collaboration between Tuberculosis program and AYUSH department in Himachal Pradesh has been instrumental in accelerating TB case finding efforts.

Other Fields

Country of research: India

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