

Title: - Leveraging Chemist Engagement in Himachal Pradesh to advance the End TB efforts through surveillance of cough Syrup in twelve districts of Himachal Pradesh, India

Background: Tuberculosis is an infectious disease caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (M. TB). TB notification plays an important role in the patient's surveillance and treatment adherence. The private sector TB case notification is a still major challenge in India. People with TB symptoms in India, first seek care from medical shops or quack. Therefore, it is important to keep surveillance on the unprescribed sales of cough syrups or other medicines. A substantial percentage of notifications did not come from the chemists. Our study aims to increase TB notification through the proper referral, recording, and reporting of patients by chemists.

Intervention: The State TB Cell, Himachal Pradesh, India was keeping surveillance on all chemists under the state and was found that unprescribed cough syrups by chemists and the chemists were not trained on TB symptoms and were not referred people with TB-like symptoms to health facilities. Further, an intervention study was undertaken from June 2023 to March 2025 by NTEP, Himachal Pradesh, and trained through various IEC/BCC and ACSM activities along with building capacity to keep a proper record of sales of cough syrups and TB presumptive referral. The referrals were tracked through an application operating application on a mobile phone. As well, the chemist associations also printed polythene bags with symptoms of TB to motivate referral of TB presumptive for timely diagnosis.

Results: The results were the intervention; A total of 7654 people were referred by chemists to the health system for TB testing in all twelve districts of Himachal Pradesh. Out of 7654 referrals, 103 people were identified with confirmed TB and 3245 chemists came forward and contributed to IEC printing materials of more than 20,0000 medicine handbags.

Conclusion: Chemists are very important stakeholders in any program and engaging them as part of the multisectoral engagement, can significantly contribute to the examination of symptomatic cases and can subsequently contribute to the early TB case detection and treatments in the area.

Summary: A detailed chemist engagement program has been rolled out in Himachal Pradesh, India to keep surveillance on the non-prescribed sales of cough syrups to increase referrals and notification of persons with TB.

