ADDRESSING TB IN DURBAN'S HIGH RISK HOMELESS AND DRUG USER POPULATION: A MOBILE X-RAY TESTING INITIATIVE

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BACKGROUND

- 328,000 estimated people who developed TB
- 234,000 (71%) estimated people who developed TB and were coinfected with HIV.
- 89,000 people were diagnosed with both TB and HIV.
- South Africa is estimated to have more than 136,000 missing cases of tuberculosis (TB).
- eThekwini has an estimated 16,000 homeless individuals. 60% of homeless individuals self reported to using drugs in a 2016 HSRC study.
- Unhoused individuals and people who use drugs (PWUD) at high risk of TB and HIV.
- High rates of co-morbid conditions (e.g. addiction, HIV) in these populations.
METHODS

Screening Approach:
• A mobile screening team was established to conduct screenings targeting unhoused individuals and PWUD. The initiative covered shelters, hostels, and frequented public spaces.
• The goal was to proactively identify TB cases in these populations, as they are more susceptible due to living conditions, food insecurity, stigmatization and other factors.

Benefits of the Initiative:
• Early detection of TB cases among unhoused individuals and PWUD is crucial for timely treatment and reducing transmission.
• Utilizing mobile teams and advanced diagnostic tools enhances access to healthcare services for marginalized communities.
• Gene Xpert and qXR software improve diagnostic accuracy, reducing the likelihood of false positives or negatives.
• This initiative aligns with global efforts to eliminate TB as a public health threat.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Totals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Screened via Mobile X-Ray</td>
<td>435</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abnormal X-Ray</td>
<td>112 (26%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>TB Suggestive</td>
<td>45 (40%)</td>
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<td>Total percent of all screened that had x-rays indicative of TB</td>
<td>9%</td>
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RESULTS

• 435 individuals received chest radiography, 112 (26%) of those individuals had abnormal x-rays.

• 45 (40%) of those 112 individuals with abnormal x-rays were suggestive of TB.

• 3 individuals who had normal X-Rays were initiated onto treatment using their sputum results and may have been missed if we had only the x-ray results as the only means of diagnosis.

• 6 individuals (13%) had abnormal x-ray findings but tested negative for TB using Gene Xpert, highlighting the importance of employing multiple diagnostic tools.

• The mobile X-ray testing initiative identified a significant number of potential TB cases (9%), emphasizing the urgent need to address TB in people living with HIV.
Recommendations & Conclusions

Recommendations: Based on findings and lessons learned, we recommend a multi-faceted approach to address TB and HIV among Durban's homeless population. This includes targeted resources, enhanced stakeholder collaboration, and innovative strategies for holistic care. Here are some key take-aways.

• Allocate targeted resources for homeless-specific TB and HIV programs in Durban due to high TB prevalence.

• Implement mobile chest X-ray initiatives to locate hidden TB cases among the homeless.

• Strengthen collaboration between NGOs and the Department of Health to identify missing TB cases in key populations.

• Emphasize peer support post-diagnosis to ensure treatment linkage and adherence for individuals.

• Conclusion: The increasing number of homeless individuals globally demands immediate action to address their pressing health challenges, especially the high rates of TB and its association with HIV. This mobile X-ray testing initiative serves as a compelling case study, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions and collaborative efforts.
Thank you

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