

Understanding TB services among migrant population in urban areas of Nepal

Background: Tuberculosis is a major public health problem in Nepal, placing unremitting threat especially to poor and vulnerable people. Migrants seem to have problems to access TB services. Evidence suggests, among registered TB cases, 66% are migrants in urban areas. Migrants are being increasing rapidly in urban area and studies have been conducted yet in migrants focusing on issues of TB and its transmission.

Objective: To understand the impact of migration in largely implemented DOTS programme and to identify potential risk factors that limit completion of TB treatment among migrant TB patients.

Methods: In-depth interview among 30 TB patients (23 migrants) and 4 health workers and two (male and female migrant TB patients) focus group discussion were conducted. One day workshop was organized to all staffs of Urban DOTS center, NTC and DPHO to know issues and challenges of migrant TB patients.

Findings: TB patients faced problem from both patient and health system perspective. Patients need roaming for searching TB services and sometime due to no proper guidance from health workers. Delay in diagnosis, lack of diagnostic facility, delay communication, re investigation, side effects of drugs, inconvenient opening hour of DOTS centers, difficulty in bearing travel cost, need of buying TB drugs due to late in treatment center, unaware about free TB drugs scheme etc. are the major problems faced by patients. Sometimes TB patients do not get medicine from DOTS center of outside valley even showing the treatment card leading to miss medicine.

Conclusion: Most of the migrant TB patients become defaulted due to economic or other problems and cannot get contacted during follow up. Hence, Health worker need to be proactive and patients also needs to be accountable towards medicine.

