

Routine TB Screening Among New HIV Positive Clients: Experience from ICAP-Ethiopia

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CHALLENGES TO IMPLEMENTATION

- TB is a major cause of morbidity and mortality among people living with HIV despite antiretroviral therapy.
- An essential strategy to decrease the burden of TB is intensified case finding or TB screening.
- Effective TB screening in clinical settings where individuals receiving HIV care and treatment services can be done using a standard set of questions.
- Lack of proper TB screening results in large number of undiagnosed TB and increased morbidity and mortality. Undiagnosed TB also increases the risk of immune reconstitution inflammatory syndrome (IRIS) when ART is initiated.
- This crucial component of TB/HIV intervention was not given due emphasis in Ethiopia particularly during the early phase ART program introduction.

INTERVENTIONS

- Columbia university's ICAP-Ethiopia supports comprehensive HIV/AIDS services at 42 health facilities in Ethiopia.
- Cognizant of the TB/HIV linkage gap, ICAP-Ethiopia introduced the concept of 'routine TB screening' for all patients in HIV care at five selected hospitals (Dilchora, Hiwot Fana, Jimma, Nekemt and Woliso hospitals).
- To enhance routine TB screening, ICAP-Ethiopia developed a simple and user-friendly TB screening form.
- The form is printed on colored paper for easy identification and retrieval.
- All members of the multidisciplinary HIV/AIDS team in the five hospitals were oriented to the form and the importance of TB screening.
- Additionally ICAP staff provided regular clinical mentoring on TB screening and use of the form.
- The form was completed for all HIV positive patients upon enrollment in care and treatment at the HIV clinics.
- We report the result of TB screening at five ICAP-supported hospitals.

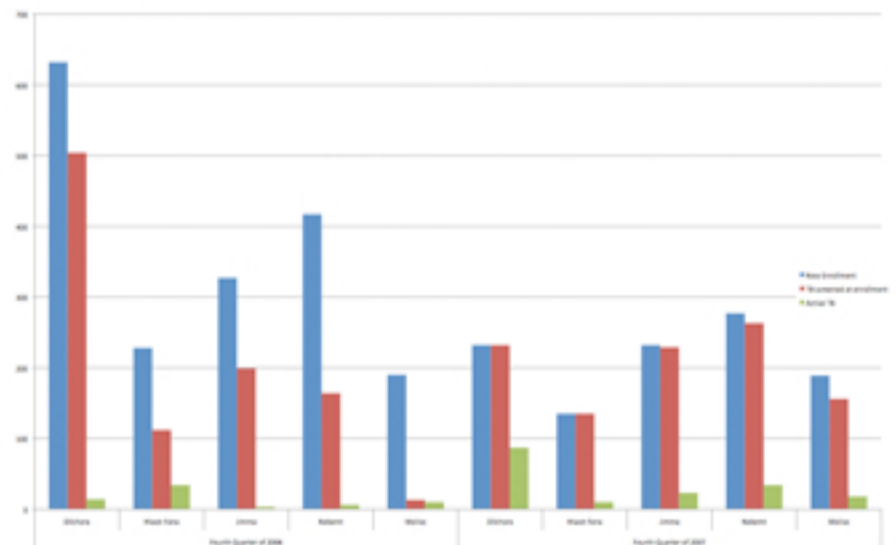
RESULTS

- The proportion of HIV patients screened for TB at enrollment increased from 55% in 2006 to 95% in 2007
- The proportion of active TB cases detected increased by 4 fold during the same time period.

Lessons Learned

- These results demonstrate that the implementation of routine TB screening using a standard set of questions among patients enrolled in HIV care is an effective strategy to enhance TB case finding.
- This intervention will certainly help to reduce the transmission of TB and the incidence of IRIS.

TB Screening and TB Case Detection at the Five Hospitals, 2006/2007, Ethiopia



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Integrating screening at HIV clinics is feasible. It is acceptable to both staff and patients and is a highly effective approach to linking TB and HIV prevention and control programs.
- Routine TB screening among HIV patients results in increased identification of active TB cases, therefore it should be implemented widely in Ethiopia.

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