

TUBERCULOSIS AND MEDICAL COLLEGES: INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Globally, tuberculosis (TB) is currently the leading cause of death from a curable infectious disease, and India alone contributes approximately twenty-five percent of cases. The medical colleges play a defining role in the diagnosis and management of TB / drug-induced adverse reactions, exploration of different aspects of TB, and timely refinement of the national guidelines. To conclude, the medical colleges can play a significant role in reducing the burden of the tuberculosis provided the future doctors are well sensitized about different aspects of TB in their medical education curriculum.

Keywords:

Tuberculosis, Medical Colleges, Curriculum

INTRODUCTION

Globally, tuberculosis (TB) is currently the leading cause of death from a curable infectious disease.¹ In the year 2013 alone, an estimated 9.0 million people developed TB and 1.5 million died from the disease, of which India alone contributes approximately twenty-five percent of cases.¹ accounting for a major share of multi-drug resistant TB and extremely drug resistant TB cases worldwide.¹ Apart from the presence of environment-related factors (viz. slums, overcrowding, poor ventilation),^{1,2} parameters like poor awareness about the disease among the community / medical fraternity,^{2,4} and weak health care delivery system,¹ have also significantly resulted in the persistent rise in number of TB cases.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

An exhaustive search for all materials related to the topic was made in different search engines, including Pubmed, World Health Organization website and Google scholar for a duration of 10 days. Relevant documents, research articles, and guidelines focusing on the association of medical education / curriculum and tuberculosis scenario in India, published in the period 2010 – 2014 were included in the study. A total of five studies were identified initially, of which, two were excluded on account of irrelevance to the present study and because of the unavailability of the complete version of the articles. Keywords used in the search include tuberculosis, medical colleges, curriculum, and India.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The medical colleges play a defining role in the diagnosis and management of TB, drug-induced adverse reactions, exploration of different aspects of TB, creating awareness among patients & community, reducing the spread of TB in community & hospital settings, and timely refinement of the national guidelines.³ However, multiple gaps have

been ascertained, especially in the medical education curriculum like limited orientation of future doctors about TB at the time of entry into medical college, scarce number of integrated teaching sessions, no sensitization about different facilities under the national program, and poorly framed examination question papers.^{3,4}

Realizing the potential scope of medical colleges in reducing the burden of TB, interventions like compulsory training of all teachers in different styles of teaching; incorporating a foundation course after admission; encouraging early clinical exposure right from the first year; organizing continuous medical education sessions for faculties and students about TB; conducting periodic integrated teaching sessions; including TB related questions in examinations; organizing field visits to the designated microscopy center; posting students in directly observed treatment (DOT) centre during their clinical posting; and motivating undergraduate and postgraduate students to pursue research on different unexplored aspects of TB, can be strategically planned and implemented in a time-bound manner.³⁻⁵

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the medical colleges can play a significant role in reducing the burden of the tuberculosis provided the future doctors are well sensitized about different aspects of TB in their medical education curriculum.

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