Abstract
SETTING: Private sector accredited drug dispensing outlets in Morogoro and pharmacies in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

OBJECTIVE: To assess 1) the level of knowledge about tuberculosis (TB) among dispensers in Tanzania's retail pharmaceutical sector; 2) practices related to identification of patients with suspected TB; 3) the availability of educational materials and training; and 4) the availability of first- and second-line anti-tuberculosis treatment in retail drug outlets.

DESIGN: A cross-sectional descriptive study involving the administration of a structured questionnaire among drug dispensers in 122 pharmacies and 173 accredited drug dispensing outlets.

RESULTS: Private retail drug outlets are convenient; most are open at least 12 h per day, 7 days/week. Although 95% of dispensers identified persistent cough as a symptom of TB, only 1% had received TB-related training in the previous 3 years; 8% of outlets stocked first-line anti-tuberculosis medicines, which are legally prohibited from being sold at retail outlets. The majority of respondents reported seeing clients with TB-like symptoms, and of these 95% reported frequently referring clients to nearby health facilities.

CONCLUSION: Private retail pharmaceutical outlets can potentially contribute to TB case detection and treatment; however, a coordinated effort is needed to train dispensers and implement appropriate referral procedures.

Source URL: http://www.msh.org/resources/understanding-private-retail-drug-outlet-dispenser-knowledge-and-practices-in-tuberculosis

Links