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#### Journal Article

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#### **Journal tags:**

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#### **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.

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