ABSTRACT

Setting: In 2011, Ethiopia introduced a strategy of symptomatic tuberculosis (TB) screening for patients attending out-patient services to increase identification of presumptive TB.

Objective: To assess implementation and factors affecting symptomatic TB screening at out-patient departments in health centres in the Amhara Region, Ethiopia.

Design: Using a cross-sectional study design, 86 randomly selected public health centres providing DOTS were included in the study. Data were captured by reviewing TB registers and interviewing key informants at out-patient services.

Results: Of 86 health centres, 24 (28%) had poor symptomatic TB screening practices, defined as screening <80% of attending out-patients. Having an actively functioning multidisciplinary health centre team to assess TB services (aOR 2.29, 95%CI 2.23–30.80) and partner support for TB activities (aOR 4.84, 95%CI 1.05–22.40) were associated with higher TB screening rates, whereas availability of antiretroviral therapy was negatively associated. In all health centres combined, 1.6% of out-patient department attendees were identified as having presumptive TB.

Conclusion: A quarter of health centres had poor symptomatic TB screening practices in the out-patient services in this study. Strengthening multidisciplinary teams and expanding partner support are recommended to improve TB screening practices at out-patient services in...
Ethiopia.


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