

## **Operations Research Brief: Uptake of CPT and linkage to ART services among TB/HIV co-infected patients at public health centers in Ethiopia**

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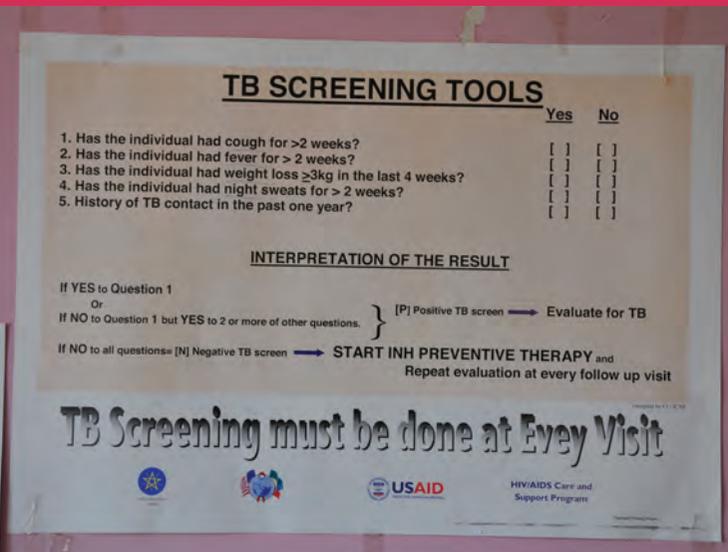
Ethiopia HIV/AIDS Care and Support Project  
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# Uptake of CPT and linkage to ART services among TB/HIV co-infected patients at public health centers in Ethiopia



This brief summarizes the findings of a special data assessment of the numbers of HIV-positive patients testing positive for tuberculosis (TB), and of patients with active TB testing positive for HIV at health centers supported by the USAID HIV/AIDS Care and Support Program (HCSP). The research aimed at understanding why uptake of CPT and linkage to ART services appeared low among TB/HIV co-infected patients. The study included TB/HIV co-infected patients at 12 high-patient-load health centers between January and June 2010. The 12 health centers accounted for 9.5 percent (2,051/21,642) of all reported TB patients and 15.9 percent (544/3,428) of all TB/HIV patients seen at HCSP-supported health centers during this period.

## Background

Between January and June 2011, the 550 HCSP-supported health centers reported a total of 21,642 TB patients. Among those tested for HIV at TB clinics, 3,428 (16%) were HIV positive. The routinely reported data showed that only 1,178 (44.3%) co-infected patients were put on antiretroviral therapy (ART) and 2,424 (87.1%) on cotrimoxazole therapy (CPT).

## Key Findings

The operations research identified a total of 673 TB/HIV co-infected patients seen at the 12 selected health centers between January 2010 and June 2010. Out of these 673 co-infected patients, 383 (57%) were newly identified as HIV-positive TB patients and the remaining 290 (43%) patients knew their HIV-positive status prior to their enrollment at a TB clinic.

## TB treatment status and outcomes

- Of the 673 TB/HIV patients, records on the TB treatment status were not found for 65 (9.7%). Among the remaining 608 patients, 237 were on treatment at the time of the study, 38 were cured, 193 had completed treatment, 41 had died, 2 had treatment failure, 33 had defaulted, and 64 had been transferred out to other health facilities.

## Uptake of CPT

- CPT uptake at the TB clinic was recorded for 72.3 percent (277/383) of newly enrolled TB/HIV patients. Among them, the CPT uptake was 96.4 percent (267/277), compared to 86 percent reported by routine data for these health centers in the same time frame.

## Linkage to ART services

- Of the 383 newly identified HIV-positive TB patients, 267 (69.8%) were found linked to an ART clinic (both ART and pre-ART) while 23.2 percent (89/383) were not enrolled and no data were found for 7 percent (21/383) of the patients. Uptake of ART was documented for only 44.1 percent (169/383) of all newly enrolled TB/HIV patients. Among the 169 patients whose ART status was documented, the uptake is 67. percent (114/169)].
- Of the 116 patients who appeared not enrolled on care and support, contact information was found for 44.8 percent (52/116).

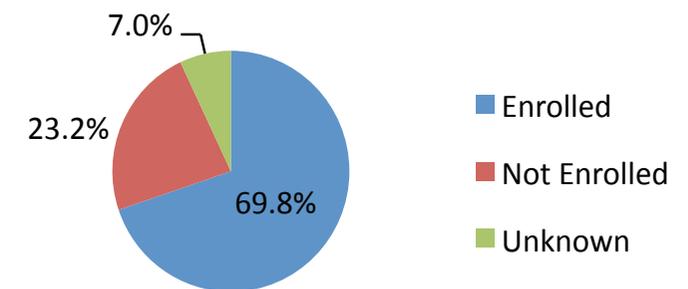
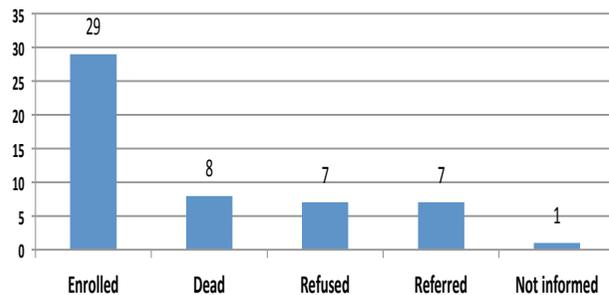


Figure 1: Enrollment status of newly identified HIV-positive TB patients at ART clinics (n=383)

- Among the 52 traced clients, the operations research was able to confirm that 46.2 percent (23/52) were not linked to care and support for the following reasons: 8 patients had died, 7 refused to enroll in the ART clinic, 7 were referred to other facilities, and one patient reported not knowing about the need to enroll in care and support (Figure 2). The remaining 55.8 percent

(29/52) were enrolled in care and support at the same health center, bringing the true linkage to care and support within the 12 health centers to 77.3 percent (296/383), compared to 44 percent reported by routine data.

- If the seven patients who were referred to another facility are also assumed to be enrolled on care and support, the overall linkage would be 79.1 percent. However, it was impossible to confirm that they had actually enrolled on ART at another health facility.



**Figure 2: Enrollment status of traced TB-HIV co-infected patients on care and support (n=52)**

## Implications

- This study found that the true linkage to ART services (77%) and uptake of CPT (96%) among TB/HIV co-infected patients at health centers is significantly higher than what was reported by routine health center data, suggesting major data recording and reporting errors. The capacity of health centers to collect, report, and use health data must therefore continue to be strengthened through in-service training, mentorship, and improvement of data management tools.
- Even though enrollment on care and support services was much better than routine data suggested, the data still identified a high number of patients (23%) for whom the opportunity was missed to link them to pre-ART or ART services. As contact information could only be found for 45 percent of apparently

unlinked patients, it is possible that stigma, fear, and discrimination may lead some patients to refuse enrollment. Improvements in data recording should, therefore, also include a focus on maintaining patient contact information.

This synopsis is based on research conducted by the following HCSP team members: Solomon Sisay, Daniel Asefa, Serkalem Girma, Legese Alemayehu, Tesfaye Arega, Mulatu Biru, Kibret Girma, Dawit Megerssa, and Elke Konings.

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