

S&T based community initiative improves detection and control of TB in Rajasthan

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A new, scientific data-based community driven initiative has dramatically improved TB detection and control in remote, underserved regions of Rajasthan.

Tuberculosis continues to be a major public health problem in many remote areas like the tribal districts of Rajasthan. Factors such as difficult terrain, low awareness, social stigma, seasonal migration, and delayed diagnosis have long hindered TB control efforts and led to TB burden.

In order to address this, AIIMS Jodhpur conducted Cluster based population survey, active case finding, laboratory confirmation to estimate the burden of TB (Active and Latent) among the tribal population and their anti-TB drug resistance pattern.

The study has found ways to limit transmission of TB in the tribal districts of southern Rajasthan, through early detection and streamlining patients to undergo preventive screening through community participation and reaching out with timely treatment.



Fig: Filed work- screening, sputum collection, Transport and health awareness

With support from the SEED division of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), they conducted Household survey, symptom screening, sputum testing, NTEP diagnostics and data analysis among more than 6000 people from Sirohi, Udaipur, Chittorgarh, Dungarpur, Pratapgarh and Banswara districts.

The researchers led by Dr Shoban Babu Varthya (Additional Professor), Department of Pharmacology AIIMS Jodhpur conducted workshops to sensitize people and combined epidemiological survey, grass root level participation of Healthcare workers (HCWs) and panchayat people to improve early detection. Active case finding laboratory confirmation was also undertaken.

People with symptoms of tuberculosis and those with positive results were identified and given treatment for TB as per national guidelines. Besides, community awareness was generated to improve the understanding of TB to help limit the transmission of TB through early detection and streamlining patients to undergo preventive screening among household contacts. This helped enable implementation of TB Mukht Panchayat model with the use of scientific data.

This initiative demonstrates how targeted, scientific research can generate actionable data that directly informs policy and strengthens TB control in vulnerable populations.

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