

I lost close friends when they realized I had TB” – the lived experiences of respondents with TB in Nairobi City County, Kenya

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Abstract

Background: Tuberculosis (TB) is a global public health problem with serious health and social implications which produce unique experiences for the patients. Understanding the lived experiences of persons with TB is important for appropriate and successful TB interventions and management. Unsuccessful treatment has grave public health consequences at individual and community levels, hence the need for comprehensive support addressing the felt experiences. The study sought to describe the lived experience of individuals with TB.

Methods: Qualitative study using 40 narratives from respondents with TB and key informant interviews from 4 TB health care providers in two health facilities in Nairobi City County using an interpretive phenomenology. Between February and March 2016, the 40 respondents were interviewed twice, first at the healthcare facility with a follow-up interview and observation at their homes. The respondents were aged 18-49 years. Content and thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data.

Results: Socioeconomic, structural and medication related factors shape the experiences of respondents with TB. Social factors such as stigma and lack of family and other social support characterize experiences of respondents with TB. TB treatment challenges such as side effects and financial constraints also shape the experiences of the patients. Although respondents reported good provider-client relationship, they have to deal with long treatment regimens and long queues when seeking treatment services in the health facilities.

Conclusions: TB management programs should account for factors that influence the lived experience of patients to facilitate effective treatment. Many of these factors constitute barriers to effective treatment and management. Facilitating

Social support structures to address stigma and promote adherence is important from a public health perspective. Strengthening health systems for efficient service delivery is imperative for not only general client satisfaction but also an incentive to retain patients in treatment course.



Biography

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