

KNOWLEDGE CAFÉ: Partnerships for Prevention of TB

The USAID-supported Tuberculosis Health Action Learning Initiative (THALI) project in Kolkata and adjoining districts aims to catalyze a dynamic process of identifying, developing, testing, and scaling up successful innovative solutions to strengthen urban TB control, especially amongst urban slum dwellers, with a focus on women and girls.

To achieve complete coverage, testing innovative strategies and generating accurate and timely data to strengthen evidence-based decision-making becomes a necessity. To improve dialogue among the multiple stakeholders that will play a role in TB prevention, THALI project, implemented by a consortium led by World Health Partners along with John Snow India (JSI India), Global Health Strategies and Child in Need Institute, has launched Knowledge Cafés — a platform for on-going sharing of best practices to inform the planning and implementation of TB service delivery. Knowledge Cafés are one of the innovative approaches that the consortium would like to organise on a periodic basis to provide a forum for open and creative conversation around topics of mutual interest to participants'. The Knowledge Cafés also provide a platform to share ideas and insights, and gain a deeper understanding of the subject and issues involved in TB prevention.

The purpose of Knowledge Cafés is to foster an environment for cross-learning, including sharing knowledge, best practices and identifying high impact interventions to improve TB programming. Knowledge Cafés will also help build and improve business relationships and networking, and promote buy-in on new initiatives.

THALI's First Knowledge Café:

JSI India organised the first Knowledge Café on 15th July, 2017 at the conference room of the Kolkata Municipal Corporation on the topic of engaging stakeholders to build buy in and support for TB prevention. Several District TB Officers from different health districts in Kolkata, South 24 Parganas, North 24 Parganas, Howrah and East Medinapore attended the event.

Dr. Daksha Shah, Dy. Exe. Health Officer and City TB Officer from the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai was invited to share insights on how the Municipal Corporation has engaged a variety of stakeholders, including international donors, leading corporations, and civil society organisations to support TB prevention efforts in Mumbai.

Speaker:

Dr. Daksha Shah has served in various capacities with the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai for the past 22 years. She has led multiple health programs, including Non-Communicable Diseases, Malaria and HIV prevention. Dr. Shah has presented papers at various national and international conferences. In addition to a degree in medicine, she is a Fulbright Scholar and Humphrey Fellow.

Highlights:

The City TB Officer welcomed Dr. Shah to Kolkata and mentioned that this event would be a good example of cross-learning. THALI's Project Director also welcomed everybody in the audience and introduced Dr. Shah.



Dr. Daksha Shah presenting before THALI's members, and healthcare officials

Dr. Shah began her presentation by providing an overview of Mumbai's TB landscape. Key points include:

- 60% of the total population of 12.4 million live in slums
- TB incidence is 250 per lakh
- MDR TB is 33.6 per lakh in comparison to India's average of 9.9 per lakh
- Each year 25,000 - 30,000 suspected cases are examined, which include 50% from private sector who come to the Municipal Corporation for treatment
- Defaulter rate is as high as 20%

Dr. Shah shared some of the challenges in tackling TB:

- High defaulter rate
- Poor nutrition
- Stigma
- Relapse
- Unregulated private sector where 50% of patients seek treatment

In order to overcome the above challenges and address them, the Mumbai Mission for TB Control was launched in 2013. Some of the initiatives the Mumbai Mission for TB Control has undertaken include:

- Active Case Detection
- Strengthening of TB diagnostic facilities
- Setting up of DR TB OPDs in renowned hospitals like "Sarvodaya"
- Lab culture and DST facilities at "Hinduja Hospital"
- Separate beds for MDR TB cases
- Daily treatment regimen- "99 DOTs" initiated and nutrition support provided to DR TB patients
- DST guided treatment regimen rolled out
- Infection control measures started in hospitals
- "E-Nikshay" launched in 3 districts

Partnerships for TB Prevention:

While discussing the need for partnerships to prevent TB, Dr. Shah emphasized the need and importance of multi-stakeholder engagement. She mentioned that the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai has taken proactive steps to engage important key stakeholders from different sectors, including corporations and businesses, academic institutions, and the media.

Some examples of the types of partnerships Dr. Shah's team has established include:

- The Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) supports community engagement and demand generation activities. TISS also provides counselling services in Mumbai
- Lupin and the Omkar Foundation support active case detection
- SRL, InfeXn Laboratories and Metropolis Diagnostics support diagnosis

- Janssen Pharmaceutical supports nutrition for 500 drug-resistant (DR) TB patients each year
- Hinduja Hospital provides lab culture and drug susceptibility testing
- Sarvodaya Hospital established OPD and IPD for DR TB
- PVR Cinemas and individual celebrities help disseminate messages about TB prevention and champion the cause of a "TB Free Mumbai"
- Partnerships are in progress at Wadia Hospital and Godrej Memorial Hospital

When asked which factors enabled these partnerships, Dr. Shah mentioned that ongoing dialogue with CSR companies is important. Meaningful engagement can take the form of meetings, newsletter send-offs, and workshops.



Vote of Thanks delivered by Associate Director, JSI India, Mr. Niraj Agrawal

Dr. Shah used the following framework to summarize the importance of partnership:

- P- Plan
- A- Active approach
- R- Rapport
- T- Timeline
- N- Negotiate
- E- Encourage
- R- Results

Public Private Interface Agency (PPIA) model:

Dr. Shah briefly talked about the PPIA model that was launched in 2014 with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Key achievements of the PPIA are mentioned below:

- 3,670 private providers engaged, 32,100 new patients diagnosed and put on treatment, and 13,214 completed treatment as of December 2016
- Provider and chemist survey completed for FDC uptake, to which 75% agreed; followed by chemists' identification to stock FDCs

- 6,571 registrations completed through RNTCP for 99 DOTs

Conclusion:

THALI's first Knowledge Café was considered a highly successful event. Below are a selection of testimonials from participants:

- *"An extremely powerful speaker."*
- *"I felt the need to see some of the models tried by the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai."*
- *"Kolkata could replicate some models at a smaller scale."* CTO, Kolkata
- *"After a long time, KMC conference hall witnessed a nice presentation which was well framed, very comprehensive and well percolated."* Deputy CMHO, KMC
- *"The presentation was overwhelming and WHO would be willing to support [Kolkata Municipal Corporation] if some innovative approaches are tried in West Bengal."* Dr. Bipra Bishnu
- *"Held in the conference room of the Kolkata Municipal Corporation thereby promoting complete buy-in."*