Institution Based Post-COVID-19 House Hold Contact Screening of Infectious TB patients in Rural and Conflict Prone Districts Found at Western Part of Ethiopia.

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The pandemic of COVID-19 has taken back gains achieved in TB control according to the global TB report 2021. The problem is exacerbated in areas with conflicts. This emphasizes the need to re-intensify case detection and treatment in every setting to regain lost success due to the pandemic to avert TB. The aim of the study was screening of household contacts of pulmonary TB patients in rural districts subjected to intermittent conflicts.

Methods: The study was done in six health centers of three districts found at Western part of Ethiopia. A total of 145 patients diagnosed with Tuberculosis during the year 2019 to 2021 were identified at the health centers. 470 household contacts were registered to these index TB patients. The patients who were taking TB drugs at those health centers were counseled to present their household residents to the health centers to be screened. The formerly diagnosed patients were told through community health extension workers or through phone call if available. Data was collected by quantitative data collection tool. Sputum samples were also received from contacts with suggestive TB symptoms to confirm presence of tuberculosis. The laboratory methods used for diagnosis of TB is direct smear and Gene-xpert techniques. The estimate prevalence and attributed risk of TB transmission was calculated among the household contacts at 95% confidence interval. The factors associated with prevalent tuberculosis were identified by a two phase built binary logistic regression model.

Results: Among the total 470 contacts of the patients initially registered at the institutions, only 350 of them were presented for screening giving the overall success rate of 75%. A total of 14 new cases of tuberculosis detected in the screened contacts and one case was MDR TB. The overall incidence of TB was 4% (95% CI 2.6%–10.6%). Female, sleeping with index case and malnourishment were found to be the significant determinants of TB in the final multivariate binary logistic regression model.

Conclusion: The incidence of Tuberculosis was high. More cases of tuberculosis can be detected if contact screening is enhanced.

Key words: Household contacts, screening, Tuberculosis