

Questions to think about after the TB presentation

Beverley Snell August 2006

You have been employed to help develop the capacity of the essential drugs program of the Ministry of Health PHC program in one region of a north east African country - to train staff to supply drugs for the TB program and to contribute where possible to enhancing the delivery of the TB program.

The country has a 5% estimated prevalence of TB infection.

There is one 'city' in the region with about 400,000 people. There is a major 'town' of about 10,000 people in each of the 6 districts. Villages of a few hundred to a few thousand people are scattered between. There are a lot of 'pharmacies' in the main 'city', 2 or 3 in the district towns and small kiosks in the villages that sometimes sell some drugs.

How would you respond to the following issues:

1. Availability of TB drugs

We know that TB drugs must only be used for TB, but drugs like Streptomycin and Ripampicin are available in local 'pharmacies' to anyone who likes to buy them for anything.

Related issue: Some people who think they have TB have been buying drugs for self-treatment and using them until they feel better. What are the implications of this situation?

2. Culture/ethics

An MSF doctor working in a nearby hospital has been approached by an influential Military Officer asking for TB drugs to treat his brother. The MSF doctor is asking you for the drugs.

3. PHC program staff

In the region where your PHC program operates there are 95 CHWs. Some of them have been diagnosed as TB +ve. How could you help the CHWs and 'take advantage' of this situation?