

Barriers to health care by women infected with Tuberculosis in Kibera slums in Nairobi, Kenya

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Abstract

Although more men than women die from TB, the disease causes more deaths among women than all causes of maternal mortality combined. Despite TB testing and treatment being free of charge in all government health facilities in Kenya, fewer women than men access this care. This descriptive study explores the TB awareness level among Kibera residents and the barriers faced by women infected with the disease in accessing TB health care. The data used are from 100 household interviews, 5 case studies with female TB patients and 5 key informant interviews with health workers. While an awareness level of TB is above average, there are still some gaps in the knowledge regarding TB treatment, leading to poor compliance with treatment. There is also high stigma associated with TB and HIV/AIDS and poverty. Efforts to improve care seeking among female TB patients in Kibera have to target all these barriers.

Key words: Tuberculosis; women; HIV/AIDS; urban poor; Kenya

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