



Comparison of Awareness of Nutritional Support Schemes among TB Patients Receiving and Not Receiving Nikshay Mitra Support in selected TU's of a Metrocity

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Abstract:

Background: Tuberculosis (TB) is a significant public health challenge in India, causing 26–28% of the global burden of TB, with an estimated 2.8–3.0 million new cases occurring every year and causing nearly 29% of the global TB deaths. Undernutrition is recognized as a significant factor in the burden of TB, causing more than 50% of incident TB cases. Therefore, the Government of India has introduced nutritional support interventions through the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP). This includes the Nikshay Poshan Yojana (NPY), which offers Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), and the Nikshay Mitra initiative. However, the awareness and utilization are low.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was carried out among 212 drug-sensitive pulmonary TB patients enrolled under NTEP in two tuberculosis centers in Bengaluru. The participants were equally divided into Nikshay Mitra recipients and non-recipients, comprising 106 participants in each group. A pre-tested structured questionnaire was used to collect data on socio-demographic variables, awareness about NPY (DBT), and Nikshay Mitra, and nutritional support. Descriptive statistics and Chi-square test were used for data analysis, and $p < 0.05$ was considered significant.

Results: Among 212 participants, 116 (54.7%) were aware of NPY (DBT), and 114 (53.8%) were aware of the Nikshay Mitra initiative. However, none of the participants reported receiving DBT, indicating a complete gap in financial benefit delivery.

Awareness of DBT was significantly higher among Nikshay Mitra recipients compared to non-recipients (70.8% vs 38.7%, $p < 0.001$). Similarly, awareness of the Nikshay Mitra scheme was markedly higher among beneficiaries (99.1% vs 8.5%, $p < 0.001$). Knowledge regarding the importance of nutrition was also significantly higher among recipients (76.4% vs 56.6%, $p = 0.002$).

Conclusion: The awareness of the DBT was moderate. However, the utilisation of the DBT was nil, indicating a critical implementation gap. The awareness of the Nikshay Mitra initiative was moderate, the utilization of of the same was limited

Keywords:

Tuberculosis, Nikshay Poshan Yojana, Direct Benefit Transfer, Nikshay Mitra, awareness, nutritional support, NTEP.