

Abstract

Introduction:

Worldwide, TB is a public health concern problem and mortality and morbidity continues to rise. TB infects about a third of the world's population with Sub Saharan Africa leading. Uganda, a country with a high prevalence of HIV is burdened by TB. Prevention and treatment of the disease requires concerted efforts from both health workers and patients. Knowledge, attitude and perception of the general population towards TB could play a major role in the prevention and treatment of this deadly disease.

Objective:

The study sought to investigate the knowledge, attitude and perception towards tuberculosis among adults aged between 18-50 years by Thika town residents. Methods: the study employed a cross sectional design in which 316 residents of Thika town council were interviewed using a simple random sampling technique. Data was entered into and analyzed. Results: There were more females, 196 (62%) than males, 120 (38%) who participated in the study. Majority of the respondents, 211 (66.8%) reported to perceive TB as a disease of the poor while 105 (33.2%) did not perceive TB as a disease for the poor. The research study revealed that most of the respondents, 273 (86.4%) have a perception that TB can be cured yet 43 (13.6%) had a perception that TB cannot be cured. Of the 316 research participants, 214 (67.7%) thought that hospitalization of TB was necessary while, 102 (32.3%) thought otherwise.

Conclusions:

The level of knowledge among the residents of Thika town is still low. Increasing knowledge about TB and proper distinction of TB from other diseases such as HIV/AIDS is important in prevention of stigma which could hinder patients to seeking healthcare. The attitude of prevention rather than treatment should be developed and people must know that although men have a higher risk of developing TB, both men and women are equally susceptible to TB. Stigmatization is further enhanced by isolation of patients in TB wards at health facilities and in homes yet some health practices and health education information increases fear of TB by insisting on the need for isolation of patients and

separation of utensils used by TB patients. Recommendations: Positively change the population their attitude towards TB and reduce stigmatization of TB patients. Integrate the role of traditional healers in notifying and referring TB patients to health facilities by training them to identify TB patients. Health education that TB is curable, and that patients once under treatment become noninfectious within a few weeks, early diagnosis and adherence to treatment should be stressed. Awareness to the community that the difference between HIV/AIDS and TB, although the two diseases have an association.

Further research needs to be done in areas of knowledge, attitude and perception of health workers and traditional healers towards TB patients because such people influence the control and management of TB as a communicable disease in the community.