

Active Case Finding In TB Can Save Rs 36,000 Per Patient' (26-03-2018)

LUCKNOW, 24 MARCH 2018: The switch from passive to active case finding strategy for TB promises to lessen the economic burden of the disease in state.

Till Modi government announced to eliminate TB by 2025, TB patients in the country were identified only when they walked into a health facility. Since the adoption of active case finding (ACF), health workers are knocking house to house to screen TB patients.

In the three ACF rounds that have taken place in the state so far, over 1.25 crore patients were screened for TB. Of these, 7,303 were diagnosed with TB and have been put on medication.

"What is remarkable about the exercise is that these patients have been identified about 4-6 months before the appearance of serious symptoms. This has a huge socio-economic implication," informed GS Naveen Kumar, special secretary health on World TB Day being observed on Saturday.

Explaining the fall out of early detection of TB cases in population, senior supervisor, TB Abhay Chand Mitra said, "a confirmed TB patient passes on the infection to at least 10-15 persons. Identification of the cases about six months in advance has curbed this transmission. Besides this, the patients have been saved from the risk of developing resistant form of TB."

On the economic side, those identified with TB saved the money that they would have spent at the doorsteps of doctors to get their disease diagnosed. "Our internal estimates show that a person spends about Rs 2,000 per month at different clinics before TB gets confirmed. Also, since the disease was diagnosed early, the loss of productivity could be curtailed," said Mitra.

Quick maths explains how ACF can save people for wastage of money. Take the example of a contractual computer operator who was diagnosed TB before signs like cough and loss of weight and energy appeared. The six month advantage translated into a saving of Rs 12,000.

Considering that he would be earning at least Rs 4,045 per month (calculated from UP's per capita income of Rs 48,540), the saving for six months comes down to 24,270. The total savings due to early diagnosis comes down to around Rs 36,000. This translates into Rs 26.48 crore for 7,303 persons.

"The per person saving may not be a big amount for some but it is surely a fortune for the poor - such as daily wage labourers, rickshaw pullers, house maids and so on - who form the biggest chunk of sufferers," said Prof Rajendra Prasad, vice-president, national task force for revised national tuberculosis control programme, India.

Earlier during the Union health minister JP Nadda and Union minister of health Anupriya Patel launched the UP vs TB campaign. Addressing on the occasion, health minister Sidharth Nath Singh said that if India was to end TB, UP will have to play an active role.

"About 30% of all TB cases in the world are from India and UP accounts for one fifth of all cases in India," he said.