

## **Abstract 27**

### **Adherence and adverse effects among patients on anti-tuberculosis therapy attending Pannai Chest Clinic, Jaffna**

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**Background and objective:** Tuberculosis remains prevalent in Sri Lanka. Although the treatment is lifesaving, poor adherence to the medication remains a problem, leading to drug resistance for anti-tuberculosis medication in Sri Lanka. The objective of this study was to describe the adherence and adverse effects and identify the factors associated with adherence among patients on anti-tuberculosis therapy attending Pannai Chest Clinic, Jaffna.

**Methods:** This was a clinic-based descriptive cross-sectional study conducted at Chest Clinic, Pannai among 109 patients with tuberculosis who had completed at least one-month treatment. The data was collected by using interview administered questionnaire, extraction sheets and analysed using SPSS23 software. Adherence was defined as not missing any dose of the anti-tuberculosis treatment. Standard descriptive statistics, Chi-square test and Fisher's exact test were used in the analysis with a significance level of 0.05.

**Results:** Of the 109 patients' majority (96.3%) were adults ( $\geq 18$  years) with a mean age of 48.6 years, and more than two-thirds (67.9%) were males. 58.7% were unaware about tuberculosis before diagnosis. Family support was seen in 92.7%. 52.3% reported that staff explained about the disease and importance of the treatment. Adherence to anti-tuberculosis medications was 85.3%. 77.1% experienced at least one adverse effect. Common adverse effects were numbness/tingling of extremities (51.4%), loss of appetite (33.0%) and joint pain (14.7%). The frequency of adverse effects was slightly higher during the continuation phase (77.9%) than the intensive phase (60%), but this difference was not statistically significant. Factors associated with adherence were missing clinic visits ( $p < 0.001$ ), and sex ( $p = 0.016$ ). Forgetting medication was more prevalent among males compared to females. There was no significant association between adherence and duration of therapy, family support, awareness of TB and adverse effects.

**Conclusion:** Despite having good family support and no significant association with adverse effect, 14.7% of the patients did not adhere to their anti-tuberculosis medication. Since strict adherence to treatment is crucial for successful treatment of tuberculosis and to prevent relapse and drug-resistance, measures are needed to identify people more vulnerable to non-adherence and improve their adherence.

**Keywords:** tuberculosis, adherence, adverse effects, anti – tuberculosis medications