

Patient Needs Assessment of Tuberculosis in Aborigines

Abstract

Objective: Tuberculosis (TB) incidence and death rate in mountain areas were higher than the average in Taiwan. Most of the residents in mountain areas were aborigines. Generally, the aborigines' living condition, health behaviors, and income were worse than general population. It was more difficult for them to seek medical care. This research would like to investigate the needs for aborigines with TB disease. Through to meet their needs and reduce the burden of seeking health services for them, the aim is to increase the cure rate.

Methods: This research used the aborigine new TB cases listed in CDC between 2004 and 2005. Using the structured questionnaire, the public health nursing instructors interviewed aborigine TB patients to collect data. There were total 316 valid questionnaires to be collected. Chi-square test and t-test were used to analyze the differences in demographic variables, treatment status, TB perception, and health behavior between aborigine TB patients living in mountain areas and those not living in mountain areas. Multiple regression analysis was applied to investigate the key factors that influenced the related needs for aborigine TB patients.

Results: There was 66.77% aborigine TB patients who had drug side effect. The major side effects included joints pain, tiredness, and skin itch. 14.71% aborigine TB patients stopped taking medicine due to drug side effect. The major troubles during the treatment for aborigine TB patients were economic factor, transportation, and long treatment time. Regarding the needs, the most urgent needs were financial support and transportation. The next were psychological, social, medical and physiological factors. Based on the results of multiple regression model, there was more healthcare needs as increases in age, education level, and the TB-related perception for aborigine TB patients. In addition, patients with drug side effect had more healthcare needs.

Conclusions and suggestions: Economic factor, transportation, drug side effect and TB-related perception were the factors that influenced the needs for aborigine TB patients. This research has some recommendations for health policy decision makers as follows: (1) Through IDS program, assigning TB specialists to mountain areas to treat aborigine TB patients; (2) Offering specific transportation for aborigine TB patients to reduce the burdens of seeking medical treatment; (3) Offering the financial reward for complete treatment; (4) Enhancing the quality and management for TB notification system. The recommendations for healthcare staffs were the following: (1) Modifying some medication to reduce the side effect and the frequency of medicine

taking. (2) Enhancing TB knowledge and perception for aborigine TB patients. (3) Improving their health behaviors through health education. (4) Increasing the communication and concern to patients. (5) Reinforcing the case management for aborigine TB patients not living in mountain areas.