

The World TB Day calendar



APRIL
2004

MARCH
2005



April

The story of Ahmed



This is Ahmed. Ahmed is a teacher. He lives with his wife and two children and his mother in a village 20 miles from the nearest health facility. This is his story of how he became ill from tuberculosis (TB) and how he was cured with the help of his treatment supporter. Ahmed then became a treatment supporter himself so that he could help other people with TB in his village .

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A P R I L
2004

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T

he importance of TB treatment supporters

This calendar emphasizes the importance of TB treatment supporters in the fight against TB. Their role is crucial in providing frontline support and encouragement to patients and ensuring that treatment is successful.



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April
2004

May

Ahmed feels unwell



For the last few weeks Ahmed has been feeling unwell. He is suffering from a cough that won't go away, fever, sweating at night – even when the weather is cold, loss of appetite, weight loss and tiredness.

Wife: Ahmed, I think you should go to the clinic for tests.

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W hat are the symptoms of TB?

Tuberculosis (TB) is a disease caused by an organism called *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. These organisms are also known as tubercle bacilli. Usually they affect the lungs, in which case the disease is called pulmonary TB. Pulmonary TB is the most common type of TB worldwide.

Symptoms of pulmonary TB include:

- A cough that won't go away
- Fever
- Sweating at night – even when the weather is cold
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Tiredness

Patients may display some or all of these symptoms.



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May
2004

June

At the clinic



06

The nurse at the clinic asks Ahmed to cough into a small pot. She takes three samples and sends them to the laboratory where they test them and tell Ahmed that he has TB.

Nurse: Anyone can get TB. You get it by breathing in the germs of an infected person. You must cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough to stop TB being spread to other people. Please bring your family to the clinic to be tested.

The nurse transfers Ahmed to the treatment unit in his village.

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2004

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H

ow is TB spread?

TB in the lungs is dangerous for other people because it spreads easily from person to person. When a person sick with TB coughs or sneezes, the TB germs are sprayed into the air. These germs get into the lungs of other people breathing the air that contains the germs. It is easy to pass these germs on to family members when there are many people living in a small closed-in space, and there is not enough fresh air.

The treatment supporter should tell patients to cover their mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing to prevent the spread of TB.



June
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July

Taking the medicine



07

Ahmed is told he must take four types of drugs together every day for two months and then two drugs every day for another four months. As he lives far from the health facility, a health worker, Abdulla, in his village becomes his treatment supporter.

Abdulla: We must arrange to meet every day, Ahmed, so that you can take your medicine and I will answer any questions you have.

J U L Y
2004

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T

he importance of trust in a treatment supporter

A TB treatment supporter is chosen by a patient because he/she trusts him. It is important that the patient feels comfortable with the treatment supporter and can ask questions about things that might be difficult to understand. The patient may be very ill and feel ashamed about having TB. Listening to and encouraging TB patients and their families will provide reassurance.



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July
2004

August

Ahmed's family get tested



Abdulla asks Ahmed to bring his young son and daughter, who are five and seven, his wife and his mother to be tested for TB. Luckily none of them have the disease. His son is given isoniazid every day for the next 6 months, a medicine to prevent him getting the disease. He is most at risk because he is so young.

08

AUGUST
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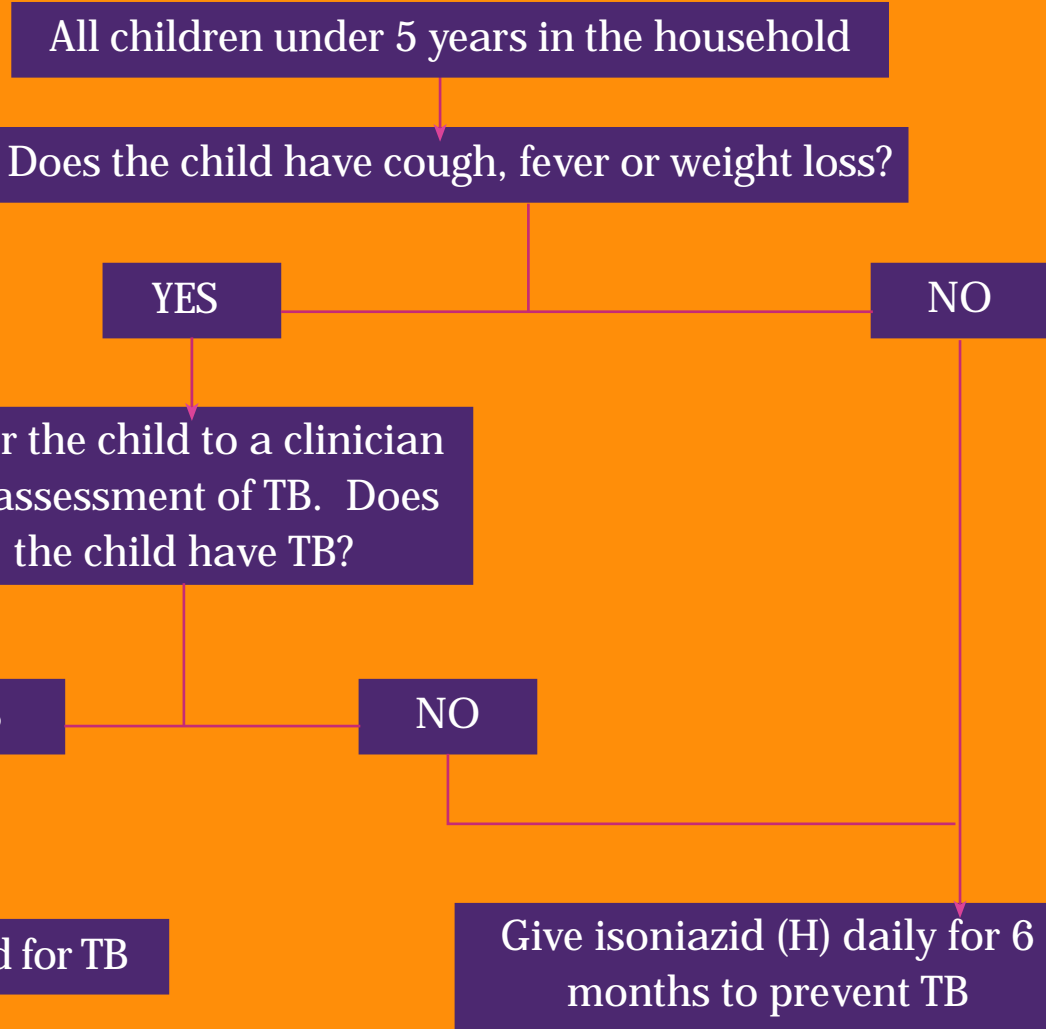
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reventive therapy for children under 5 years



August
2004

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September

The importance of completing the treatment



Ahmed: I'm feeling so much better now. Can I stop taking the medicine?

Abdulla: No Ahmed. It is very important that you finish the whole course of your treatment. Otherwise the disease may become incurable as the bacteria become resistant to the drugs. You are also at risk of giving TB to your family and others in the community if you don't finish all the treatment.

09

SEPTEMBER
2004

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W

hy is it important to complete the treatment?

The drugs that kill the TB germs are called TB drugs. TB can cause death if it is not correctly and completely treated. Patients will continue to transmit TB to others in the family or community if they do not take all their TB drugs. Taking only some of the drugs or not completing the whole treatment will not cure TB. It is dangerous not to follow the treatment correctly and take only some of the TB drugs because the disease may then become incurable.



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September
2004

October

Side effects of TB drugs



Ahmed tells Abdulla that he is suffering from nausea.
Abdulla: Don't worry Ahmed, this is a very normal side effect of the medicine you are taking. From now on bring some food or gruel to eat each time you take the drugs. This should stop you feeling sick.

10

OCTOBER
2004

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ossible side effects of TB drugs

Most TB patients complete their treatment without any significant side effects.

However the table below describes the side effects from which patients may suffer. Side effects may be minor or may be major.

Minor side effects	Management
Anorexia, nausea, abdominal pain	Take drugs with food or gruel
Joint pains	Aspirin
Burning sensation in feet	Pyridoxine 100 mg daily
Orange/red urine	Reassure patient that this is expected (with rifampicin)
Major side effects	Management
Itching of skin, skin rash	Stop anti-TB drugs
Deafness (confirm that this is not due to ear wax)	Refer the patient urgently to a clinician
Dizziness, lack of balance	
Jaundice (yellow skin or eyes)	
Vomiting repeatedly	
Difficulty with vision	



October
2004

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November

Ahmed is cured!



Abdulla reminds Ahmed that he must visit the health facility for a follow up sputum exam after 6 months. Ahmed's test is negative. He is cured! Thanks be to God! Ahmed and his family are very happy.

11

NOVEMBER
2004

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T

he five elements of DOTS

DOTS (Directly Observed Treatment, Short-course) is the name for a comprehensive strategy which primary health services around the world are using to detect and cure TB patients. There are five elements to this strategy:

1. DETECTION – identification of people with TB symptoms by sputum smear microscopy
2. TREATMENT – daily observed treatment with standardized drugs (short course)
3. DRUG SUPPLY – uninterrupted supply of quality TB drugs
4. MONITORING – standardized recording and reporting of TB statistics
5. POLITICAL COMMITMENT – government commitment to sustained TB control



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November
2004

December

Ahmed becomes a treatment supporter



Ahmed: I am so pleased that I am cured. Thank you Abdulla for all the help and support you gave me during my treatment. I would also like to help other people with TB. Could I become a treatment supporter?

Abdulla: We would love to have your help in the fight against TB. You must go to the health facility to learn the responsibilities of being a treatment supporter.

12

DECEMBER
2004

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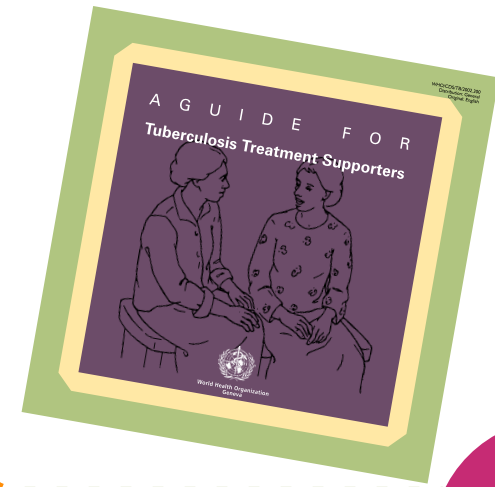
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R

esponsibilities of a treatment supporter

The role of a TB treatment supporter is very important. As a treatment supporter, you must:

- Agree on a time and place to meet with the TB patient. Do not make the patient wait.
- Give the patient the TB drugs at each appointment according to the schedule. Look at the drugs to be sure they are correct. Watch the patient swallow all the drugs.
- Record on the TB treatment card each time the patient takes the drugs.
- Encourage the patient to continue coming for treatment.



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December
2004

January

Ahmed's new role



JANUARY 2005

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01

Ahmed is now Azza's treatment supporter. Ahmed learns that he must:

- Watch Azza take the right TB drugs.
- Mark the TB treatment card after she has taken the drugs.
- Encourage her to continue coming for TB treatment.

R

esponsibilities of a treatment supporter

A TB treatment supporter must also:

- Respond quickly if the patient misses a scheduled treatment by finding the patient.
- Collect a fresh supply of TB drugs from the health facility each month.
- Be sure the patient goes to the health facility when a follow-up sputum exam is due.



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January
2005

February

Ahmed's new role



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July																															
August																															

Ahmed learns he must also:

- Make sure there is always a supply of drugs for Azza. He picks up the drugs from the local health facility.
- Refer her to the health facility if there are any problems.
- Make sure Azza goes to the health facility when her follow up exams are due.

02

FEBRUARY
2005

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erving the community

The treatment supporter helps the community in getting rid of TB by looking out for people displaying the symptoms of TB. When someone in the village is suffering with the symptoms of TB, the treatment supporter speaks with them, reassures them and encourages them to visit the health facility for testing. The treatment supporter should explain how the suspect will be tested for TB by sputum smear microscopy.



February
2005

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March

Celebrate World TB Day



03

World TB Day is held on 24 March every year to raise awareness of the symptoms, diagnosis and treatment of TB, and the importance of effective TB control. Abdulla and the other treatment supporters from local villages hold a party where they give out information about TB to let people know about TB disease.

M A R C H
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C

elebrate World TB Day

World TB Day is held annually on 24 March, commemorating the date in 1882 when Dr Robert Koch presented his discovery of the TB bacillus to a group of doctors in Berlin.

Over 60 countries worldwide have held successful, innovative events for World TB Days to raise awareness of the symptoms, diagnosis and treatment of TB, and the importance of effective TB control. How will you get involved?



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March
2005



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