

Afghanistan

Towards Zero TB Deaths Among Children

Afghan Community Research & Empowerment Organization for Development (ACREOD)

Five-year old Hameedullah had suffered from coughing and weakness for over six weeks. His parents had taken him to a number of public and private clinics/hospitals, but his health didn't improve. Finally his parents brought Hameedullah to Indra Gandhi Institute for Child Health Care (IGICH) where a TB REACH project had been launched by Afghan Community Research & Empowerment Organization for Development (ACREOD).

Located in Kabul City, IGICH is the reference pediatric specialist hospital in the country, delivering health care to 800-1,000 children every day. Under the TB REACH project, ACREOD has enabled a system within IGICH and 14 other public and private hospitals to screen every child attending the hospital for TB. This system strengthens TB control in IGICH and other hospitals through supporting following areas: (1) Building capacity of IGICH 25 doctors who work in eight Out patients Department (OPDs), two emergency rooms, and eight of the hospital wards set up to receive incoming children. (2) Assigning a TB unit from the hospital staff comprised of a doctor, a radiologist, an X ray technician, a laboratory technician, a DOT provider and TB services supervisor, and building this unit's capacity in childhood TB management and care. (3) Training 41 pediatric specialists from eight other public and six private hospitals in Kabul city and establishing a presumptive child TB referral scheme from these hospitals to IGICH. (4) Broadening this referral system to include the private clinics run by 30 private pediatric specialists. (5) Providing digital X-ray and LED microscopy facilities to IGICH. (6) Supplying awareness-raising posters for child TB to IGICH and 14 public and private hospitals. (7) Conducting continuous supervision and monitoring visits that have increased the knowledge and skills of health workers in early case detection and treatment of TB among children.

Thus, during Hameedullah's first visit to IGICH, the TB unit was able to diagnose Hameedullah's TB disease. Hameedullah was enrolled for TB treatment shortly after. Furthermore, the TB team investigated the source of infection within Hameedullah's family and found that Hameedullah's parents both have active TB. In seven months the project has had great success as the number of detected TB cases has dramatically increased. A total of 785 cases, of which 543 pediatric cases can be considered as additional compared to the previous year, were diagnosed and enrolled for treatment. This is more than three-fold the number of TB cases notified during the same period of time last year. All children diagnosed with TB have been enrolled for TB treatment. The project interventions for childhood TB care have enabled early TB case detection and treatment, greatly improving long-term outcomes for children and their families.



Photo Acknowledgment WHO / Riccardo Venturi

StopTB Partnership
TB REACH

