

Preparedness of outpatient health facilities for ambulatory treatment with all-oral short DR-TB treatment regimens in Zhytomyr, Ukraine: A cross-sectional study

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Abstract

Background: Ukraine has a high burden of drug-resistant tuberculosis (DR-TB). Mental health problems, including alcohol use disorder, are common comorbidities. One in five DR-TB patients has human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). As part of health reform, the country is moving from inpatient-care to ambulatory primary care for tuberculosis (TB). In Zhytomyr oblast, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) is supporting care for DR-TB patients on all-oral short DR-TB regimens. This study describes the preparedness of ambulatory care facilities in Zhytomyr oblast, Ukraine to provide good quality ambulatory care. **Methods:** This is a retrospective analysis of routinely collected programme data. Before discharge of every patient from the hospital, MSF teams assess service available at outpatient facilities using a standardised questionnaire. The assessment evaluates access, human-resources, availability of medicines, infection control measures, laboratory and diagnostic services, and psychosocial support. **Results:** We visited 68 outpatient facilities in 22 districts between June 2018 and September 2019. Twenty-seven health posts, 24 TB-units, 13 ambulatories, two family doctors and one polyclinic, serving 30% of DR-TB patients in the oblast by September 2019, were included. All facilities provided directly observed treatment, but only seven (10%) provided weekend-services. All facilities had at least one medical staff member, but TB-training was insufficient and mostly limited to TB-doctors. Anti-TB-medicines and adequate storage space were available in all facilities, but only five (8%) had ancillary medicines. HIV-positive patients had to visit a separate facility to access HIV-care. Personal protective equipment was unavailable in 32 (55%) facilities. Basic laboratory services were available in TB-units, but only four (17%) performed audiometry. Only ten (42%) TB-units had psychosocial support available, and nine (38%) offered psychiatric support. **Conclusion:** Outpatient facilities in Zhytomyr oblast are not yet prepared to provide comprehensive care for DR-TB patients. Capacity of all facilities needs strengthening with trainings, infection control measures and infrastructure. Integration of psychosocial services, treatment of co-morbidities and adverse events at the same facility are essential for successful decentralisation. The health reform is an opportunity to establish quality, patient-centred care.

Full Text

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Figures

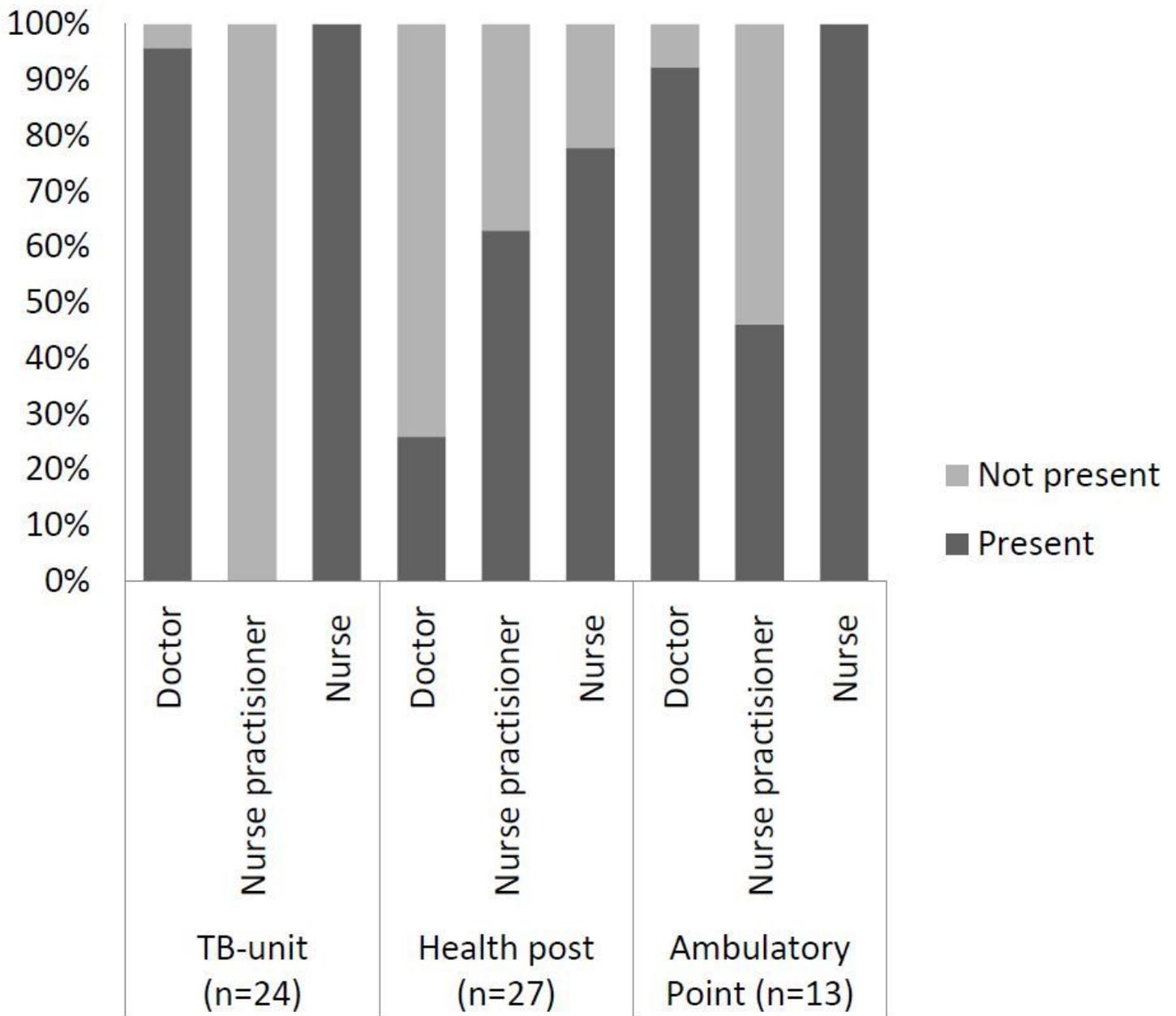


Figure 1

Presence of clinical staff in selected facilities assessed for preparedness for ambulatory DR-TB care between June 2018-September 2019 in Zhytomyr Oblast, Ukraine. TB= tuberculosis.

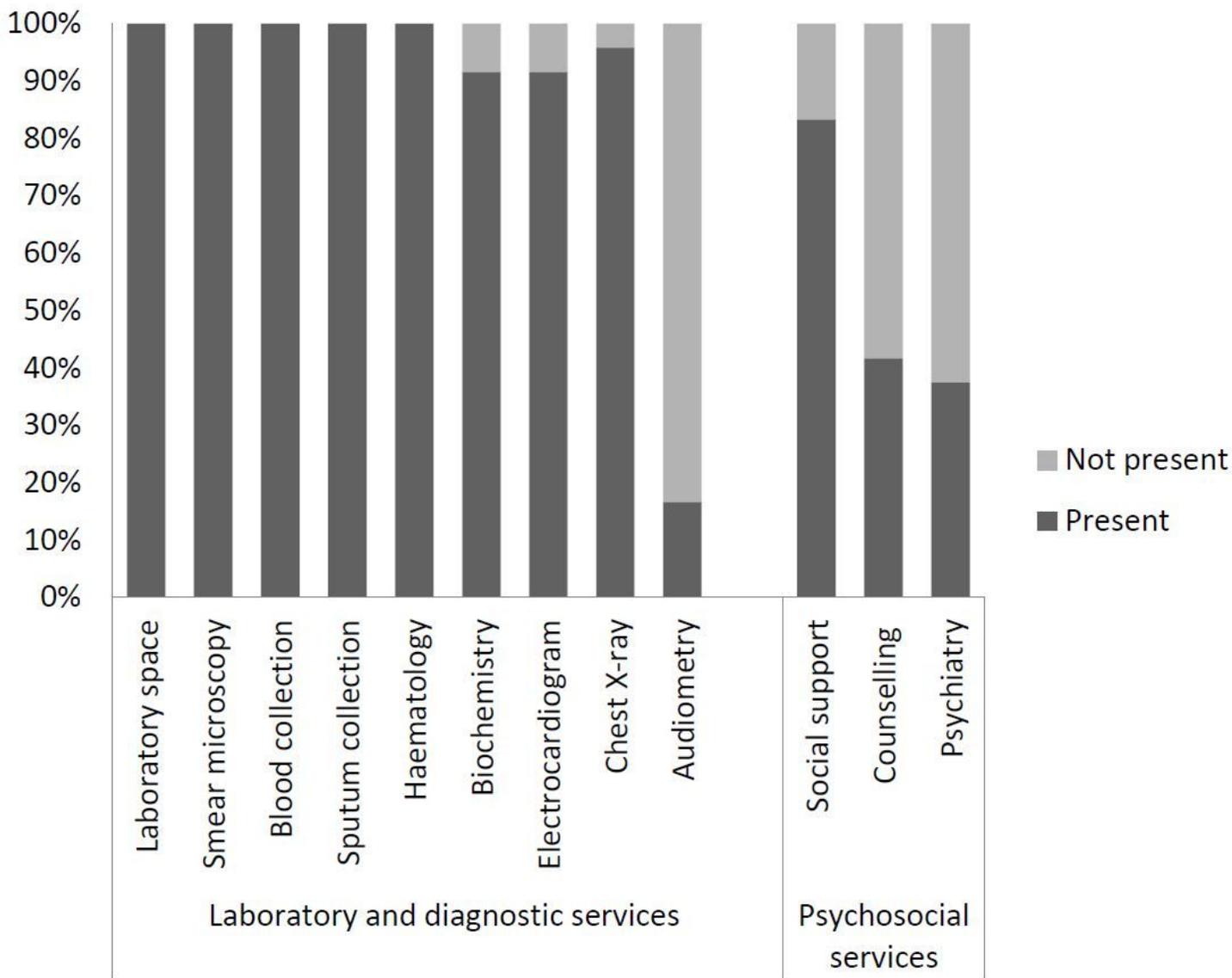


Figure 2

Availability of laboratory, diagnostic and psychosocial services in TB-units assessed for preparedness for ambulatory DR-TB care between June 2018–September 2019 in Zhytomyr oblast, Ukraine.

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