Patient Adherence in Treatment of Tuberculosis and the Effect by Implementation of the DOTS Strategy

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ABSTRACT

Tuberculosis is responsible for one of the highest morbidity rates in the world. Poor adherence is the main cause of incomplete treatment, leading to treatment failure, relapse, death, and drug resistant TB. Patient adherence is influenced by multiple factors, such as social-economic status, understanding and attitude about the treatment, communication between medical staff and patients, and the availability of health care service. Directly observed therapy, short-course (DOTS) program is an important strategy for promoting patient adherence and has lead to a decrease in the worldwide incidence, prevalence and death rate of the disease since the mid-1990s. However, direct supervision of drug intake is only part of the DOTS program, which also includes government support and action, precise diagnosis and follow-up, adequate medical resources, effective treatment, supervision and evaluation. In Taiwan, the incidence of tuberculosis has noticeably decreased since the implementation of the DOTS and the DOTS-plus programs in 2005 and 2007, respectively. Other concerns, such as latent tuberculosis infection, multi-drug-resistant tuberculosis, and human immunodeficiency virus-tuberculosis co-infection, will be increasingly important for management of tuberculosis in the future.

Key words: Tuberculosis, Adherence, DOTS program

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