

Evaluation of routine contact investigation in Ethiopia: a missed opportunity in preventing childhood TB

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Background

The 2013 global roadmap for childhood tuberculosis calls for countries to implement contact screening and provide preventive therapy to children younger than 5 years.

Objective

To evaluate the implementation status of child contacts screening and management in Addis Ababa.

Method

Structured questionnaires were administered to smear positive TB patients living with children ≤ 5 years in their household and care providers in TB, HIV and child health clinics of primary health care setting in Addis Ababa

Results

From 27 health centers visited in Addis Ababa, 688 registered smear positive TB patients were approached of whom 203 (29.5%) reported to have household contacts of 5 years and below. Health care workers had requested 48 (23.6%) to bring their child for TB screening and 45 (93.8%) had complied with the request.

A total of 230 children were living in a household with a smear positive PTB patient and 152 (66.1%) of these children were not screened for TB. Among the 78 (33.9%) children screened, 2 had TB, 76 screened negative and only 3 (3.8%) were put on IPT. None of the HCW interviewed said to routinely record and report figures on contact screening and IPT provision.

Conclusion

Household child contact screening and management was sub-optimal and an important opportunity lost in preventing TB among children under 5 years of age. This could be attributed to untrained staff and lack of monitoring tools at key entry point such as child health clinic.

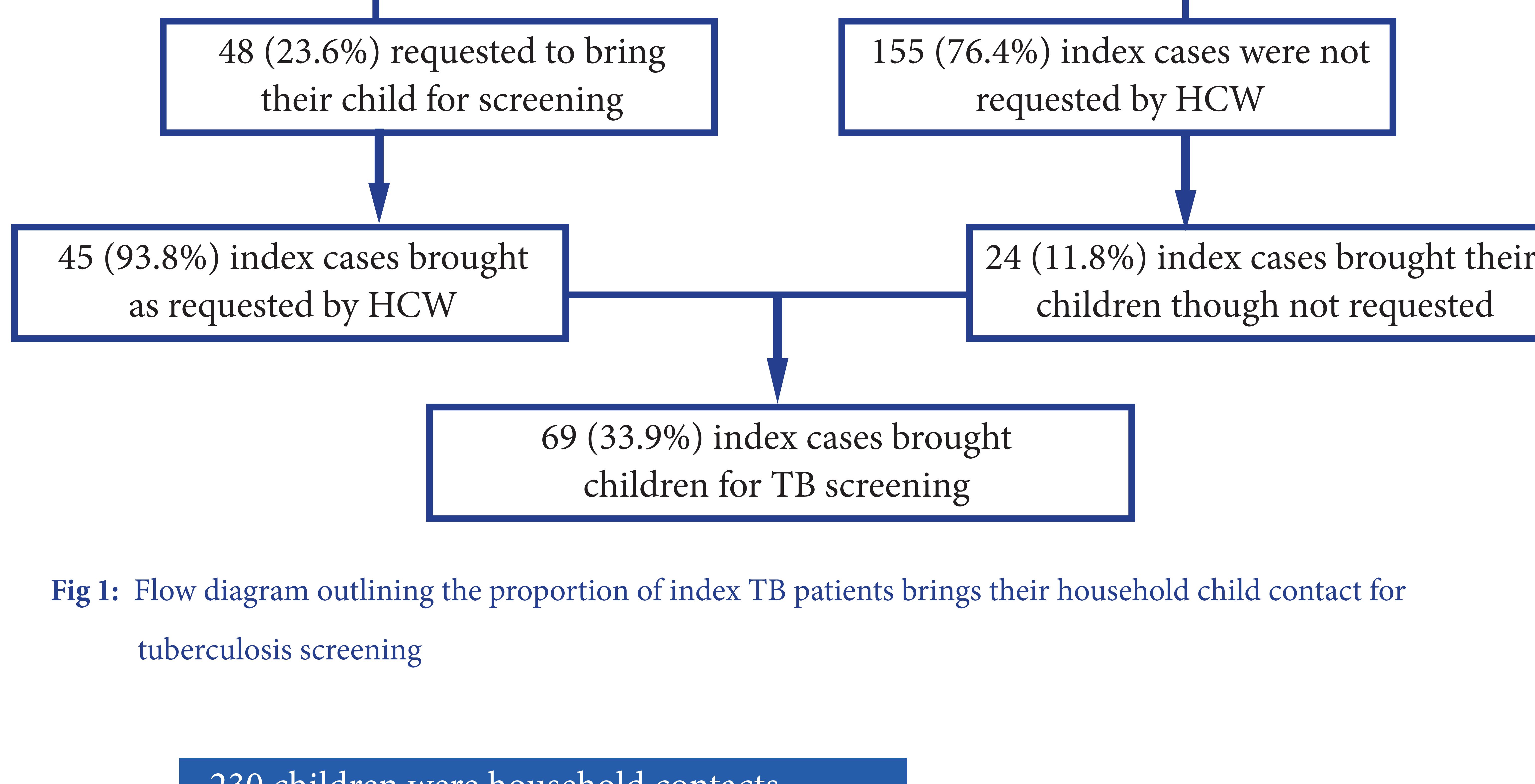


Fig 1: Flow diagram outlining the proportion of index TB patients brings their household child contact for tuberculosis screening

230 children were household contacts of smear positive TB cases

78 (33.9%) screened for TB

2 (2.5%) TB Dx

76 (97.4%) screened negative

3(3.8%) IPT

Fig 2: Performance of TB screening & preventive treatment among household contacts of children