

Philippines

Patient Centered TB-HIV care in a one-stop-shop

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Background

The NGO LoveYourself is the pioneer in creating 3 community HIV testing centers in Metro Manila, the Philippines, designed with particular focus on Men-having-Sex-with-Men (MSM). They provide free HIV screening, counseling and education. The very LGBT+ friendly space afforded to patients promotes trust to the clients. In 2016, the Philippine Department of Health (DOH) reported that LoveYourself identified 42% (1,452/3,477) of newly diagnosed People Living with HIV (PLHIV) in Metro Manila or 17% contribution nationwide (1,452/8,514). LoveYourself then began screening for TB among its PLHIV clients. Presumptive TB patients were referred to TB DOTS facilities. Monitoring of these referrals was not part of the protocol. LoveYourself remained unaware of their referrals' TB status, treatment status, follow-up examinations and outcome, adherence to daily TB medications and contact investigations.

FTMP implementation area: Matching the Services to patient pathways

Description

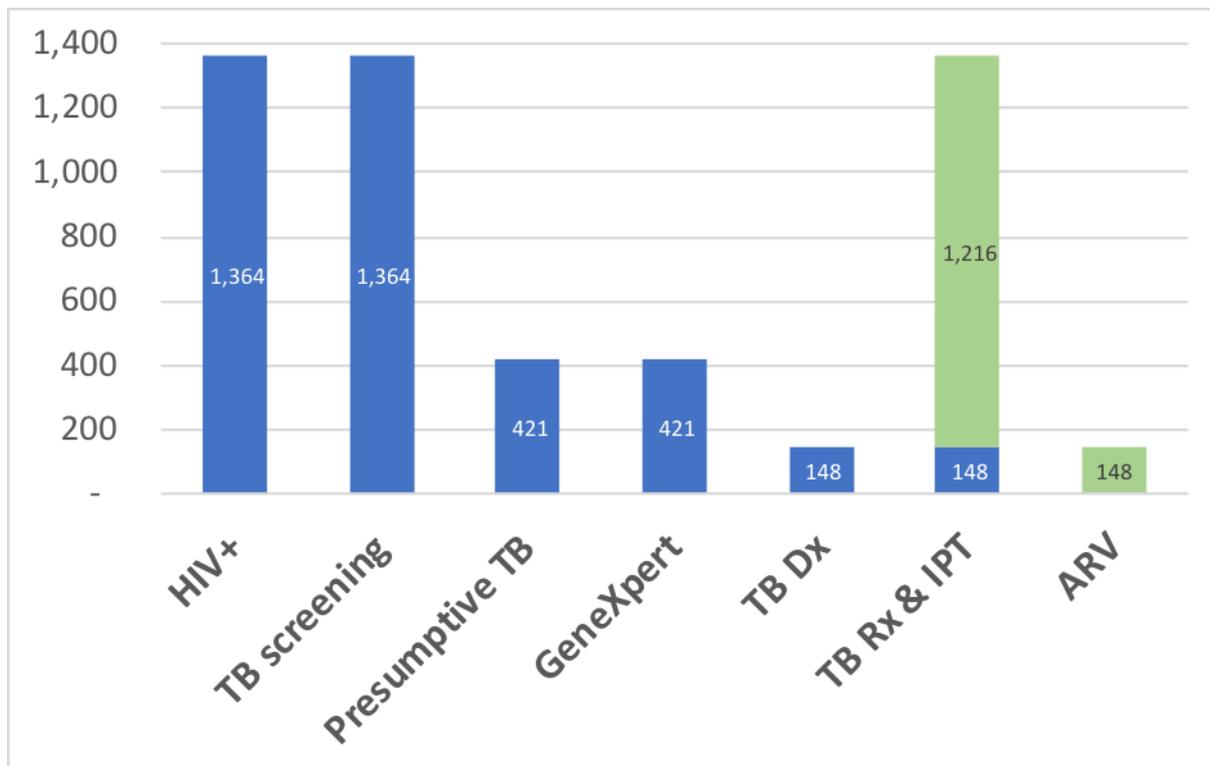
The objective of the "Building Models for the Future" project was to improve health governance and access to affordable quality TB-HIV care through effective partnerships between government and the non-public sector. In 2017, in collaboration with the Philippine DOH's National TB Control Program (NTP), the National AIDS/STI Prevention and Control Program (NASPCP), and the Mandaluyong City Health Office, the project provided technical assistance to LoveYourself to establish in their Mandaluyong City branch in Metro Manila a "one-stop shop" facility for quality TB and HIV care. The other two centers refer their presumptive patients to this center or other NTP facilities near the patient's location.

Through the NTP a training on the program's Manual of Procedure was conducted where an algorithm called for GeneXpert testing for TB for PLHIV. The project provided LoveYourself a GeneXpert machine to ensure that PLHIV with TB symptom(s), including findings on chest X-ray, are tested, diagnosed and initiated on treatment without delay, at the level of point of care. The clinic was provided and stocked with regular provisions of TB and HIV medications, including MTB/RIF cartridges for GeneXpert use. A direct link and access to the national Integrated TB Information System (ITIS) allowed ease of regular submission of reports. Aside from project technical assistance, the clinic is also part of the local NTP's regular monitoring and supervision schedule.

LoveYourself also received technical assistance to comply with the requirements of the Department of Health's TB DOTS certification, and Philippine Health Insurance Corporation's (PhilHealth) accreditation making the clinic eligible to reimbursement of both the TB Out-patient Benefit Package (US\$80 per TB patient cured) and the Outpatient HIV/AIDS Treatment Package (US\$600 per PLHIV annually). PhilHealth reimburses the facility \$150 per quarter for every patient that completes treatment for a quarter. The facility decides how to use the reimbursement received for their HIV/AIDS and TB treatment services. This will ensure continuous and sustainable provision of quality TB-HIV care to all patients accessing the clinic's services.

Outcomes/successes

From February 01, 2017 to June 30, 2018, LoveYourself had a total of 1,364 newly enrolled PLHIV, 100% of whom were symptom-screened for TB. Among these, 421 (31%) had symptoms of TB, and underwent GeneXpert testing. Of these, 148 (35%) were diagnosed TB patients, and 100% were started on anti-TB treatment. Of those without TB, 100% were started on Isoniazid Preventive Therapy (IPT). Among those who started TB treatment from February 1 until September 30, 2017, 54 (98%) have completed treatment. The cohort analysis of the 93 patients who commenced treatment after October 01, 2017 is not yet available. Within seven months, LoveYourself has established a full-service TB clinic within the same location as its HIV clinic.



Lessons learned

Active involvement of all levels of the government health program from national to local government unit is essential to achieve these successful outcomes such as 100% treatment initiation of diagnosed TB patients and 100% IPT initiation. This includes frequent and regular monitoring and supervision, and ensuring that key components to successful program implementation are fast-tracked and in place. This is critical for a solid foundation of ownership, trust and optimism among and between partners, and timely realization of rewards. The NTP being visible and actively involved renders legitimacy to project implementation. LoveYourself is now officially a part of the NTP and HIV Service Provider Network.

Sustainability/scale-up

Within the year after engagement, the TB and HIV services of LoveYourself were duly certified by the DOH and accredited by the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation.

Realizing the good experience of having integrated care in one setting, LoveYourself Management made the decision to link its other HIV community center and its transgender clinic, both located in the City of Manila, to the main clinic in the City of Mandaluyong, through a strengthened referral system, recognized by the local City Health Offices.

The model is currently used as basis for establishing TB-HIV integrated care in other non-public sector facilities, within the project and beyond.