

Assessing the Effect of National TB Control Policy Gaps on Community Health Among People Living with TB and Healthcare Providers in Karu (L.G.A), Nassarawa State

Uzoma Munachimso Mercedes*, Oluwatoyosi A. Adekeye

Department of Community Medicine and Primary Health Care

*Corresponding Author

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Tuberculosis (TB) remains a significant public health problem globally and is closely felt in Nigeria. Despite the TB control policies, namely DOTS, National TB Control Policy, Community-Based TB care policy and MDR TB management policy, implementation gaps still persist, especially at the local level. In Karu L.G.A, the persistence of TB reflects challenges like poor healthcare infrastructure that have limited the success of these policies. The study aimed to identify specific gaps in national TB control policies in Karu L.G.A and assessed community health impact. It identified the perspectives and challenges faced by health workers in implementing these policies.

Methodology: A descriptive cross-sectional study design was used in this study. The study participants were 217 people living with TB and health care providers, selected through stratified random sampling from three health facilities involved in TB care. Data was analyzed using SPSS. Ethical approval was obtained from the Health Research Ethics Committee of Bingham University.

Results: The study revealed structural weaknesses in Karu L.G.A's TB control policies. Lack of awareness and education accounted for 40.3% of weaknesses with 71.4% of respondents not being aware of TB control policies. Limited diagnostic access made up 33.9%, while inadequate funding, poor follow-up, and weak collaboration contributed 25.9%. These gaps caused delayed diagnosis in 30.9% and poor public health education in 52.5% worsening TB spread, and confirming a strong negative correlation between TB policy gaps and community health.

Conclusion: Improving TB control efforts in Karu L.G.A requires effective strategies like policy reforms, health-system capacity enhancement, resource mobilization, enhanced governance commitment, stigma reduction, targeted and active community involvement. The recommendations highlighted could inform future guidelines for National TB control programs aligned with Nigeria's vision of eradicating TB as a public health problem.

Keywords: Tuberculosis, Policy Gaps, Community Health, Implementation Challenges, Nigeria

