

## TB Control ..... Factors Affecting Adherence To Treatment In Menofia Governorate

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### Abstract

Egypt has a long history in the fight against tuberculosis, but it still constitutes a major public health problem. Non-adherence of TB patients to treatment is one of the main problems that lead to persistence of TB in the community. The benefits of TB treatment hold only if it is taken regularly and according to prescription. One of the main goals of the National TB Control Program (NTP) is to reduce the number of defaulting TB patients in Egypt. The aim of this study is to identify the underlying factors that lead to low compliance and defaulting of TB patients in Menofia Governorate. Results of this study proved that noncompliance of the TB patients to treatment is caused by bi-dimensional factors; factors related to the health care service quality and personal factors related to the patients themselves. A total of 56% of defaulters in this study attributed their noncompliance to factors reflecting inadequate patient education and support by the health care providers. Deficiency of the health education process was proved in this study as one fourth of the studied sample were never given any information about the disease. Duration of treatment was only mentioned to 76% of patients and only 3.1% were informed about the importance of regularity of treatment. Detailed interrogation with the patients about the quality of service revealed significant difference between completers and defaulters regarding the location of the clinic and the health care providers attitude. About 15% of defaulters mentioned that they sought treatment elsewhere, which means that they lost confidence in the clinic. A group of 6.5% of defaulters claimed their noncompliance to wrong information given by providers concerning duration of treatment, also, 19.5% of defaulters attributed, their defaulting to personal factors. On the other hand, investigating health care providers knowledge, showed marked shortage in both the TB epidemiology and the standard case management especially the follow up system. Therefore it is recommended to promote compliance of TB patients to treatment through developing a proper strategy for improving the service quality and upgrading knowledge and skills of providers. It is also recommended to increase the role of the NGOs and community in supporting TB patients.

### Introduction:

Today, tuberculosis (TB) situation is alarming almost every where in the world (WHO, 1995). Egypt has a long history in the fight against tuberculosis, but it still constitutes a major public health problem for many reasons such as the serious delay in the diagnosis, inadequate treatment and irregular intake of drugs by patients. This situation leads to the presence of high numbers of chronic TB patients, forming a good source of infection in the community. Besides, these patients harbor strains that have become resistant against one

or more anti tuberculosis drugs ( NTP, 1994 ). The Tuberculin Survey in Egypt 1995 –1997 has calculated the annual risk of tuberculosis infection ( ARI ) to be 0.32 % . ( NTP, 1998 ). The benefits of TB treatment hold only if it is taken regularly and according to prescription (Murray et al, 1990) . Unfortunately, from the moment out-patient treatment was introduced in the mid 1950's, poor patient compliance has presented a persistent world wide problem and remains the principle cause of treatment failure ( Fox, 1983 ). The main dilemma in TB control is the issue of