

The additional financial burden of care-seeking for TB symptoms in South Africa's private sector

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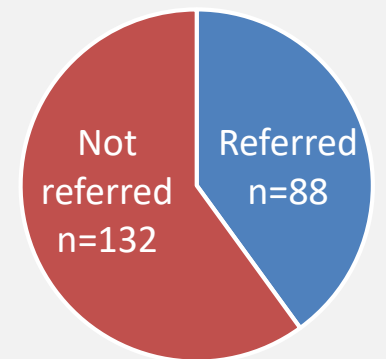
Background

- South Africa offers TB testing free from user-fees through the national public health system; however, an estimated 29% of people with TB symptoms first report to private providers
- We utilised data from a study of standardised patients (SPs) – healthy patient actors – to estimate the financial burden borne by patients presenting with TB symptoms to private general practitioners (GPs) in KwaZulu-Natal

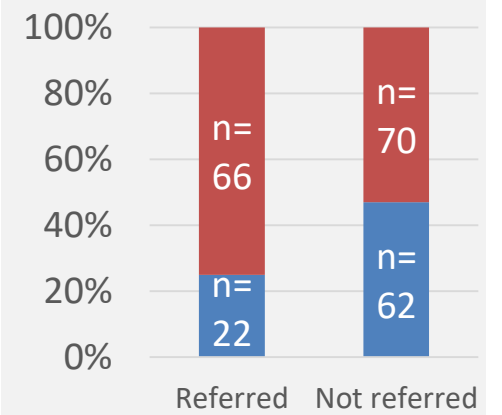
Results

- Mean consult fee was US\$22
- GP fee waived in 5 consults (2%)
- No significant differences found between referred & non-referred SPs for:
 - referral for private tests: 1% vs 9%, p=0.78
 - mean consult fee: ZAR305 vs ZAR306, p=0.94
 - medication prescription: 9% vs 9%, p=1

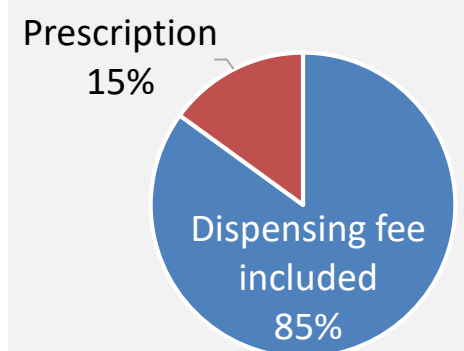
Clinic Referral



Follow-up request



Medication Cost



Design/Methods

- We analysed data from 220 initial GP consultations via cash-paying SPs undertaken in 2018
- We summarised the cost of patient interactions and compared cost drivers for those who were referred and not referred to the public health sector for TB testing or treatment.

Conclusions

- 98% of SPs presenting to private GPs incurred out-of-pocket costs
- SPs were referred to public system in 40% of consultations
- Non-referred SPs were more often asked to return to GP, incurring further costs
- Additional costs included prescription medications and diagnostic tests which would be freely available in public sector
- A National Health Insurance scheme is expected to reduce these cost burdens

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