

COMMUNITY'S SUPPORT

Recognizing the great impact social stigma can have on the effectiveness of the National TB Control Programme, MAPTB has taken several community initiatives such as disseminating correct technical information on TB, printing educational pamphlets and organizing community exhibitions & talks to reduce the stigma of being diagnosed with TB. Medical staff treating TB patients are also sensitized to be aware of possible social stigma attached with being diagnosed with TB and to actively enquire on these issues and manage them effectively if recognized.

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Persatuan Mencegah Penyakit Tiba W.P. Labuan

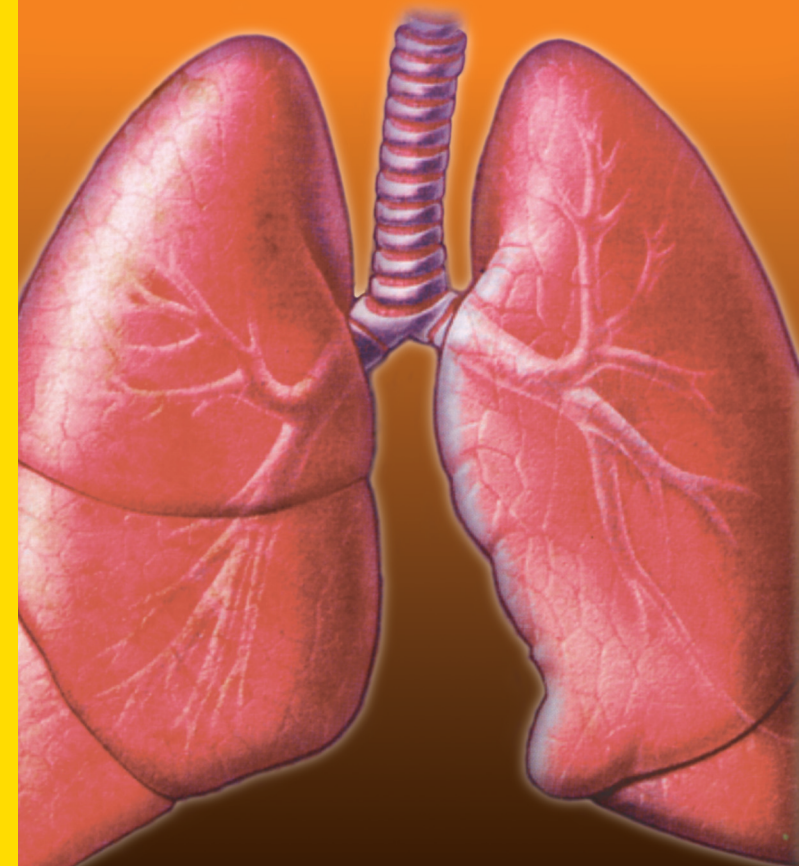
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TB SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT ON PATIENTS



TB STIGMA

TB STIGMA

Although TB is a completely curable disease, there is still considerable social stigma attached to this disease. Some of the basis of this stigma, is related to the perception that TB is a disease that is related to being 'unclean', poverty or even hereditary. There is also a misperception of risk of transmission to their contacts at home or work even though the patients are on regular treatment.

SOCIAL IMPACT OF TB STIGMA

Social stigma related to TB has led to situations of patients refusing to seek treatment till in an advanced stage, being irregular with treatment, stopped from work, ostracized by the family and community and even preventing women from getting married or being divorced by their husbands.

OVERCOMING TB STIGMA

The main strategy to overcome this unnecessary stigma is education that is tailored to the community and the patient/family in particular. At the community level, constant emphasis that TB is another airborne disease that is not related to a person's hygiene or economic status is an important step to address the community anxiety. Apart from this, the emphasis that TB can be completely cured if detected early and treated effectively is a major positive point that should be highlighted constantly. Public testimonies by community leaders/ celebrities affected by TB and individuals who have successfully completed their treatment are other useful strategies that can be used to destigmatise the disease.

FAMILY SUPPORT

On the personal level, joint counseling of the individual and the family members will go a long way to dispel misperceptions related to this disease such as sleeping together, sharing cutlery and socializing. It should be clearly stated that the risk of TB transmission is minimal after being diagnosed and started on treatment and to emphasize that the greatest transmission risk was BEFORE the patient was diagnosed with TB and thus the need for contact examination.

EMPLOYER'S SUPPORT

If deemed necessary, the employers should also be counseled in a similar way so as to reassure them that the patient is no longer a health risk to his co-workers and to ensure that his employment status is not affected by being treated for TB. Legislative laws are available to prevent workers from being unfairly dismissed for being treated for curable diseases such as TB.

**I AM
STOPPING TB**