

**The provision of tuberculosis patient care: A Sociological  
perspective on primary health care nurses in the Qwa-Qwa district  
of the Free State**

**By**

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## SUMMARY

Tuberculosis is one of the major health tragedies facing South Africa. It is estimated that nearly two-thirds of the population of the country are infected with the tuberculosis bacterium and 160 000 South Africans from all walks of life become ill with tuberculosis every year (Department of Health, 1997: 4). An innovative approach is needed to fight the problem of tuberculosis. In view of the important role played by primary health care nurses with regard to the care of patients with tuberculosis, the overall aim of the study is to contribute to an improvement of tuberculosis patient care, *inter alia*, by attending to the problems pertaining to the provision of tuberculosis patient care at the government clinics in the Qwa-Qwa district of the Free State.

The study attempts to describe the difficulties that primary health care nurses at the government clinics in Qwa-Qwa experience in the provision of tuberculosis patient care, and how their attitudes towards patients affect their service. The nurses need to be informed about how their attitudes influence their service. The perceptions of primary health care nurses in this matter are ascertained to assess their personal experience in their routine care of tuberculosis patients.

The results of this research study indicate the following obstacles for primary health care nurses to render effective tuberculosis patient care at the government clinics in Qwa-Qwa:

- Lack of knowledge, training and skills amongst some of the nurses in the treatment of tuberculosis,
- Poor access to tuberculosis information, which include the procedures that protect nurses from tuberculosis infection;
- Poor management system for nurses in tuberculosis patient care;
- Lack of key health resources related to tuberculosis treatment;
- Fear of the consequences of contracting tuberculosis by some of the nurses, and;
- Negative attitudes of some nurses towards tuberculosis patients as well as towards their work.

## OPSOMMING

In Suid Afrika is tuberkulose een van die ernstigste gesondheidsprobleme waarmee rekening gehou moet word. Daar word beraam dat meer as twee derdes van die Suid Afrikaanse bevolking geïnfekteer is met die tuberkulose bakterie en dat 160 000 individue uit alle vlakke van die gemeenskap elke jaar geïnfekteer word (Departement van Gesondheid, 1997: 4). 'n Innoverende benadering is nodig om die probleem van tuberkulose te beveg. In die lig van die belangrike rol wat primêresorg-verpleegpersoneel speel in terme van pasient sorg in die stryd teen tuberkulose is die oorhoofse doel met hierdie studie om te fokus op die probleme wat verpleegpersoneel ondervind in staatsklinieke in die Qwa-Qwa-distrik van die Oranje Vrystaat.

Hierdie studie beoog om die probleme te beskryf wat primêresorg-verpleegpersoneel in staatsklinieke ondervind in terme van tuberkulose pasiëntsorg. Dit beoog ook om hulle houdings en persepsies weer te gee wat 'n moontlike impak mag hê op hulle dienslewering. Daar sal gefokus word op die persepsies van die tuberkulose-verpleegpersoneel se persoonlike ondervinding in hulle daaglikse roetineverpleging van tuberkulose pasiënte.

Die uitslag van hierdie studie dui op verskeie probleme waarmee die primêre-gesondheidsorgpersoneel te kampe het om 'n effektiewe diens te kan lewer aan tuberkulose pasiënte in staatsklinieke in Qwa-Qwa. Die volgende probleme is geïdentifiseer:

- In die algemeen onvoldoende kennis, opleiding en vaardighede onder verpleegpersoneel.
- Swak toegang tot inligting oor tuberkulose. Dit sluit spesifieke kennis in om personeel te beskerm teen moontlike tuberkulose-infeksie.
- Swak bestuurstelsels vir verpleegpersoneel in pasiëntsorg.
- 'n Tekort aan gesondheidshulpbronne in terme van tuberkulosebehandeling.
- Vrees vir die moontlike gevolge van dienslewering, naamlik infeksie deur die tuberkulosebakterie, by sommige verpleegpersoneellede.
- Negatiewe houdings van sommige verpleegpersoneel teenoor hulle tuberkulose pasiënte en hulle werk.

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**ACRONYMS**

AIDS	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
EMB	Ethambutol
CDC	Centre for Disease Control and Prevention
DOTS	Directly observed treatment short-course strategy
HIV	Human immuno-deficiency virus
INH	Isioniazid
IUAT	International Union Against Tuberculosis
MDR TB	Multi-drug resistant tuberculosis
PZA	Pyrazinamide
RIF	Rifampin
SANTA	South African National Tuberculosis Association
SASA	South African Sociological Association
SM	Streptomycin
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
TB	Tuberculosis
TBCP	Tuberculosis Control Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation