Catastrophic costs due to tuberculosis: a controlled study optimizing assessment


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Title
Scientific Research Abstract Text

Background:
BACKGROUND. The WHO End TB strategy includes the target that zero patients and their households should face catastrophic costs due to TB by 2035. It is unknown whether patients can reliably recall costs due to TB throughout their illness, or only recent costs, so we compared these approaches.

Design/Methods:
METHODS. When tuberculosis treatment was starting, we asked patients for ‘recent recall’ quantifying categories of pre-treatment costs due to tuberculosis since their illness began. Later, as they were completing their treatment, without reminding them of their previous assessment, we asked them to complete ‘late recall’ quantifying again the same pre-treatment costs. Other data were collected to calculate catastrophic costs due to TB, that were defined as the sum of total costs due to tuberculosis above 20% of the pre-illness annual household income. We assessed the reliability of late recall by comparing it with recent recall.

Results:
RESULTS Pre-treatment costs due to tuberculosis occurred over median 30 (interquartile range, IQR= 7-78) days. When pre-treatment costs were recently recalled, the median Peruvian Soles (S/) total illness lost income was S/300 (IQR=0-3000), medical expenses were S/250 (IQR=72-790) and non-medical expenses were S/325 (IQR=95-910). Total household costs due to tuberculosis constituted a median 12% (IQR=5-29) of pre-illness household income (that was median S/1330, IQR=850-2000). Consequently, 34% (IQR=27-41) of households experienced catastrophic costs due to tuberculosis. As shown in the figure, when pre-treatment costs were assessed by late recall a median 184 (IQR=157-220) days later, these estimates were similar (all p>0.001).

Conclusions: DISCUSSION. This study demonstrates that patients and their households can recall pre-treatment costs due to tuberculosis similarly reliably whether assessed at the start of treatment or approximately 6 months later at the end of treatment. This finding should simplify the assessment of catastrophic costs due to tuberculosis.

Summary
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The World Health Organization End TB strategy prioritizes zero TB-affected households suffering catastrophic costs. To facilitate reaching this target, we studied optimizing the timing of quantification of TB-related costs. Our findings that patients with TB accurately remember costs throughout their treatment should simplify assessing catastrophic costs due to TB

Other Fields
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