

**Title: Community-based TB control in Myanmar: Cost and contribution of TB patient Self Help Groups**

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**Background:** TB patient Self Help Groups (SHG) have been established and functioning in Myanmar to help TB patients and their families to complete treatment, be cured from TB and lead the community response towards TB. Community-based TB control is priority strategy for National TB Program in Myanmar. Therefore information on the cost of establishing SHGs and their contribution for community-based TB control are necessary to replicate this strategy.

**Objective:** To access the costs of TB patient SHGs and to find out their contributions for TB control

**Methods:** This cross-sectional study was conducted in one of the high TB burden townships, Hlaingtharyar during 2013. Cost data of four SHGs were obtained by reviewing records and interviewing with the tool to categorize cost. Document review, five focus group discussions and nine key informant interviews were performed to find out activities of SHGs for TB control.

**Results:** The SHGs composed of old TB patients, family members of TB patients and volunteers. Costs spent for four SHGs ranged from US\$ 1297 to 2848 per year. Average cost per SHG for TB control activities was approximately US\$257.2 per year. TB control activities of SHGs were referring TB suspects to health centers, providing health education, performing Directly Observed Treatment (DOT) and supporting nutrition for TB patients. On average one SHG referred 72 TB suspects and provided DOT for 64 TB patients per year. Cost for one TB patient to get diagnosis was US\$ 19 and one TB patient to complete treatment was US\$ 23.5. TB control activities of SHGs contributed 46% of case detection in Hlaingtharyar.

**Conclusion:** Although there was some additional cost to conventional DOT, the SHG approach was effective in TB control. Empowerment of the TB patients and improvement in case detection as well as treatment completion has been accomplished simultaneously through this approach.