

MISSION AND HISTORY

KNCV Tuberculosis Foundation is a national and international center of expertise for tuberculosis (TB) control and a medical development organization. The organization is committed to reducing tuberculosis in the Netherlands and worldwide in over forty countries. It does so by means of policy development, technical assistance, advisory services, training programs, capacity building, as well as epidemiological and operational research. Established in 1903 as an umbrella organization for TB control in the Netherlands, we have been fighting tuberculosis for more than a century. We develop effective, efficient and sustainable strategies for combating tuberculosis and disseminate these in the Netherlands and throughout the world.

Tuberculosis is still a wide-spread disease in some regions of the world. This is unnecessary as treatment is available that can cure tuberculosis and control the disease effectively and with limited costs, also in countries with a limited medical infrastructure. KNCV Tuberculosis Foundation was jointly responsible for developing this method (DOTS) and is still involved on a daily basis with making this method as effective and efficient as possible. The foundation has dedicated itself to implementing this method in developing countries. This is accomplished by supporting the local public health authorities and medical staff with advice and assistance.

KNCV TUBERCULOSIS FOUNDATION'S INVOLVEMENT IN KAZAKHSTAN

KNCV established an office in Almaty (Kazakhstan) in 2006, after having been active in TB in Prisons projects in Kazakhstan since 1997. Over time the office also became involved in technical assistance in the other 4 central Asian countries (Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan), and is now working on TB in prisons, TB/HIV, PMDT, psycho-social support for patients with MDR-TB, XDR-TB, TB-Infection control and overall TB control.

PSYCHO-SOCIAL SUPPORT TO TB PATIENTS IN EAST KAZAKHSTAN

In Kazakhstan, about 1000 tuberculosis patients per year fall ill with a drug resistant strain of TB (MDR-TB). These MDR-TB patients need a special 18-month long intensive daily treatment with second-line drugs that have more side effects than the standard TB treatment. It is very important that these patients complete their treatment in order not to risk relapse. Due to their illness, almost all patients are unemployed and face difficult socio-economic conditions. This causes many of them to interrupt treatment, thereby risking relapse and further transmission of TB.

In two cities located in East Kazakhstan, Oskemen and Semey, KNCV Tuberculosis Foundation started a pilot project of providing MDR-TB patients with multidisciplinary, patient-oriented support in 2009 year. Teams consisting of social workers, psychologists and TB nurses provide psycho-social and financial support tailored to the needs of the patient. KNCV Tuberculosis Foundation provides psychological and social support to MDR-TB patients in East Kazakhstan by training nurses and social workers in helping these patients, establishing psycho-social support groups, and providing MDR-TB patients with assistance including food and hygiene packages, money for their daily transportation to

the clinic, help in getting social benefits and help in finding affordable accommodation, tailored to the needs of the patient.

TYPES OF SUPPORT

Psycho-socio-economic support is provided to MDR-TB patients to prevent treatment interruptions and irregularities, and among selected risk groups, to prevent recurrent treatment and consequent MDR-TB.

- *Training of nurses and social workers in interpersonal communication*

Since counseling is one of the key elements of psycho-social support, training in interpersonal communication is conducted for members of support groups, case workers and other people involved in psycho-social support of TB patients. The main goal of training is to improve communication skills. This is a three-day training conducted at the project sites. Specialists in interpersonal communication are involved in the development of the training program and the facilitation of training.

- *Counseling*

Counseling is intended to provide ongoing motivational support to the patients in continuing and completing their treatment, to identify the patient's needs and the risk factors of defaulting on their treatment.

- *Provision of food and hygiene packages*

In most of cases families of MDRTB patients do not have enough finance for food and basic hygiene means. KNCV tuberculosis Foundation provides food (vegetable oil/ dairy butter, meat or fish tinned food, sugar, flour, spaghetti, milk), and/or hygiene packages (washing powder, tooth paste, soaps, tooth brush) to MDRTB patients based on their needs.

- *Financial support to cover travel expenses*

MDR-TB patients need to pick up their medication once a day over a period of 18 months. KNCV Tuberculosis Foundation offers patients support to cover their daily travel expenses, as some patients live quite far away from the clinic.

- *Support in finding affordable and appropriate accommodation*

Appropriate and affordable housing is one of the challenges faced by MDR-TB patients in East Kazakhstan. Some patients are in need of accommodation in recovery houses, and KNCV Tuberculosis Foundation assists patients in this process.