Xpert MTB/RIF: 
Patient/Community Perspective

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Outline of Our Presentation

- Background on TB Diagnosis
- Challenges to TB Diagnostics
- Patients Perspective on GeneXpert
- Implications of New Diagnostics
- Proposed Solutions
- Next Steps
Each year across the world as many as 9.4 million people who become sick with tuberculosis fail to access timely, accurate diagnosis and effective treatment.

Most of these people come from the poorest and most vulnerable parts of society. These invisible tuberculosis patients are suffering and sometimes dying needlessly.

And our failure to find more people who have an infectious form of tuberculosis is thwarting efforts to reduce spread of the disease.

Too many people with tuberculosis are not being reached with timely TB Diagnosis. A new initiative seeks to change that- GeneXpert
In order to reach universal access to quality-assured TB diagnostic services by 2015, the diagnostic challenges of TB, notably HIV-associated and drug-resistant TB must be of priority.

HIV-associated TB and drug-resistant TB pose particular diagnostic challenges, given that sputum smear microscopy lacks sensitivity to detect many TB patients with HIV co-infection, and cannot distinguish drug-susceptible from drug-resistant TB.
Challenges to TB Diagnosis

- The challenges include:
  - complexity of identification of persons suspected of having TB particularly children and PLHIV;
  - lack of simple, accessible, sensitive and specific diagnostic tools;
  - lack of trained laboratory professionals;
  - Grossly inadequate diagnostic laboratory infrastructure and quality assurance.
- Additionally, the lack of access to laboratory services and insufficient links between the laboratory and treatment services can be major weaknesses of National TB Programmes (NTPs).
Activists echo the need for better TB diagnostics
Quotes on GeneXpert from TB Advocates

- Is it true that GeneXpert can confirm TB within 2 hours- Patrick Maina
- This is the diagnostics tool that we have waited for all these years
- If we had geneXpert 3 years ago, maybe my brother would not have died – Naomi Chelimo
- How much will it cost and who will cover these costs – Grace Kariuki
Patients Perspective on GeneXpert

- Provides a solution to past diagnostics delays
- Time around taken to deliver results is quiet impressive
- Robust and can be performed by low cost personnel
- Access to immediate diagnosis and treatment increases the credibility of health services
Implications of GeneXpert

- Ability to rule out/confirm TB prior to ART Initiation
- Potential reduction in mortality during ART initiation
- The cost of diagnosis is 6 times what patients are paying for Chest Xray- 3 dollars way beyond the reach of many poor TB patients
- Current design of equipment targets peripheral settings
- Requires skilled/deployed personal at the point of care
- Movement of specimen from one place to another may result in potential diagnostic delays, this may be worsened if patients are not able to get results on time
- Implications of Rx scale up for patients that are diagnosed
Implications of GeneXpert

- Community perception of Genexpert- Public Health Hospitals
- Timeframe to ensure universal access to genexpert
- Why is it silent on important target populations e.g. children
- Requires continuous power supply so what happens in poor resource settings
- Roll of Xpert in ruling out TB among PLHAs
Next Steps

- Demand creation of nationwide diagnosis and treatment of MDRTB
- Community literacy on new tools and inclusion in national budgets
- Engagement of TB advocates to impact on scale up, price reduction, diagnosis and treatment