

TB REACH NATIONAL TUBERCULOSIS PROGRAMME

Finding and treating people with TB in

Pakistan

- Innovative public-private partnership brings chest screening camps to urban settings
- More than 30,000 people screened and 350 cases found.
- Active case finding in urban areas with poor access to free services



Karachi – Impoverished urban populations worldwide live in extremely close quarters and typically suffer from inadequate electric and sewage systems and a lack of clean water. These poor environmental conditions, in concert with population density, make slum dwellers especially vulnerable to tuberculosis (TB). Since March 2011 the Pakistan National TB Control Programme has been implementing a project in Sindh Province, which has the highest proportion of urban slum dwellers in Pakistan. Several closely integrated interventions are being used to increase TB case detection and support outcomes in these deprived urban areas. Chest camps are being set up to institute active case finding by providing a local venue for care seekers to receive diagnosis; communities are being educated about TB and its control, relieving stigma and improving awareness; and in an especially innovative approach, general practitioners are being recruited to receive extra training in the management of TB cases. Since 60% of this urban slum population seeks initial care from a general practitioner or other informal provider, this particular intervention has had a big impact. In the first three months of field operations, the chest camps screened over 30,000 patients and found 350 cases of the most infectious form of TB. This work represents 50% of the normal case finding though routine care in the project area. Dr. Saleem is a general practitioner in Orangi Town area who had been referring his TB patients to other facilities due to a

lack of knowledge on his part about TB treatment and drugs. On a routine visit to Dr. Saleem's clinic a TB REACH coordinator told him about TB activities and invited him to attend a three day training session on TB management that was being organized for doctors. Because he was able to take advantage of this opportunity, Dr. Saleem is now able to treat his TB patients in his own urban clinic.

Dr. Saleem reports, "I am thankful to the partnership with the public sector, for helping me enhance my knowledge of TB treatment and diagnosis. Now I can treat my TB patients with confidence and success."

