



# Tuberculosis Multimorbidity Network Newsletter

Jan 2021

## Introduction

Dear Global TB Multimorbidity colleagues and friends:

Welcome to the first TBMM newsletter of 2021. The aim of the newsletter is to keep members updated of the activities of the TBMM network and to share upcoming events of interest to members. In the sections below we cover each of the main workstreams of the TBMM project. Please do send in any events, activities and achievements that you would like to share with other members of the network. Just email Alexander on [alexander.jarde@york.ac.uk](mailto:alexander.jarde@york.ac.uk).

We aim to send out our TBMM network newsletter at least every six months, and more regularly if there are specific items to share.

Best wishes, the Newsletter Working Group.

## News and updates

### Synthesis of the evidence

#### Meta-Review of the prevalence and associated burden of TB + 1 comorbidity

We are behind schedule regarding both the meta-review and the systematic review, as progress has been slower than initially planned due to the high number of studies found (221 to screen full text). **Saima Afaq (KMU)**, who is doing an excellent job on the systematic review, has recently agreed to join the meta-review efforts, which will be a great asset.

#### Systematic Review of the prevalence and associated burden of TB + 2 comorbidities

Regarding the systematic review, we found that of the ~600 studies to assess in full text, about 100 were conference abstracts and ~50 were not accessible online, which slowed reviewers down. There were also a high number of conflicts and solving them was helpful to clarify some misunderstanding regarding the selection criteria. For now, **data will be extracted from ~110 studies**.

#### Secondary data analyses

The manuscript with the analysis of **World Health Survey** data has been submitted to the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. There are already some preliminary analyses for the **KMU** data, although a detailed analysis plan is still to be specified. Similarly, the team at **EpiLab** has been making progress on the data analysis plan. Finally, we are in contact with KNCV to assess the possibilities of using the dataset of Challenge TB, a 5-year multinational project, potentially with data on TB and several other chronic conditions.

### Review to identify candidate interventions

#### Expert Reference Group

We have started to set up the Expert Reference Group, which will review outputs from WS1 [the meta-review, systematic review, and secondary data analyses] and agree on one or more priority clusters that contribute the greatest burden, considering feasibility of intervening and potential for impact.

#### Systematic review of candidate interventions

We have started recruiting collaborators to assist with the systematic review of candidate interventions to prevent, screen and treat the cluster(s) of diseases that contribute most to TB multimorbidity disease burden. We have also started working on the protocol.

## Network

### New members: Anastasia Lam

We want to welcome **Anastasia Lam**, a PhD student at St Andrews and the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research and whose project will be related to the general area of TB multimorbidity and how it is impacted by various structural, spatial, and sociodemographic factors.

### TB and Diabetes: changing policy and practice

In November, we held our second TB Multimorbidity Network webinar and meeting, including policy-makers, practitioners, people with / survivors of TB and academics who shared evidence and experiences of integrating the screening and management of TB and diabetes within routine care in Africa and Asia. You can watch the recording [here](#).

### The Union Membership

The TBMM network team are in discussion with The International Union against TB and Lung Disease (<https://theunion.org/>) to explore ways of increasing access of TBMM network members to The Union. They offered the TBMM network 10 free spaces at their webinar on TB and Tobacco on 27th January. Union members can find details of the webinars on the Union website. We will keep you updated on future options on Union membership for TBMM network members.

### Policy Forum in Tanzania

The Policy Forum in Tanzania has been pushed to to be in March and depending on the situation of the 2nd wave pandemic, doing it online will be explored.

### Policy Forum in Pakistan

The Policy Forum in Pakistan was planned for January, although the exact date is still unknown.

## Building capacity

The Leadership Learning set is continuing their meetings as planned and making good progress in developing their research proposals on TBMM.

## Member highlight

### EpiLab

The Epidemiological Laboratory (Epi-Lab) is an independent NGO established as a public health services research centre in 2005. Epi-Lab is a collaborating centre of the International Union against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union), the University of Oslo, and the Norwegian Lung and Heart Patients Association (LHL) as co-founders. It is committed to promoting the well-being of Sudanese people with special attention to lung health, building partnership with international and national organizations, ministries of health, academia and communities.

EpiLab objectives and projects focus on improving general health status in low-income areas by adopting effective and accessible health services and initiating activities to promote public health.

EpiLab's aims are:

- To develop capacities for research in public health.
- To run pilot projects to address priority problems, evaluate them and roll them out into nationwide programs.
- To provide ongoing technical support, evaluation and monitoring to national public health initiatives/programs.
- To build strong partnerships between academic, research and health service delivery institutions to bridge the gap between academia and public health services.
- To document, archive and distribute lessons learnt from implementation research to translate it to tailored health service delivery

In 2011, the WHO and the The Union developed a collaborative framework for care and control of TB and diabetes mellitus (DM) recommending that countries undertake several activities, including



bidirectional screening for TB and DM. The Sudan diabetes associations and the Epi-Lab are involved in discussions with the Ministry of Health to explore the possibility of applying the DOTS model to diabetes care and a coordinator has been appointed at Epi-Lab to follow the plan, including the bidirectional screening for TB and DM. Understandably, for the model to be operational and become sustainable, it is important that other key principles are addressed, especially sustained political and financial commitment.

## Project focus

### KMU secondary data analyses

Khyber Medical University conducted a population wide representative survey in all the 24 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2016-2017. The survey objective was “to conduct a population-wide representative survey to collect multi-dimensional information on the various aspects of individual, household and population health in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan”.

This was a cross sectional survey conducted using multi-stage stratified cluster sampling for sample selection. Urban areas were divided into enumeration blocks based on the low, middle and high income groups while rural areas were divided into mohallas/villages and these were the primary sampling units (PSUs) of the study. Line listing of the selected PSUs were done and 12 households per urban enumeration block and 16 households per rural PSU were selected using systematic random sampling. Estimated sample of the survey was 15,724 households while data was collected from a total of 11,000 households (response rate=70%).

Data was collected on three sets of questionnaires; Household-, ever married women (aged 15-49)- and health questionnaires for adults ( $\geq 18$  years of age). Health questionnaire comprises data collected on anthropometry, communicable and non-communicable diseases, stroke, disability, health-related quality of life, physical activity, dietary recall, tobacco use, environmental health, and medicine used.

The outcomes of the survey will help to identify the prevalence of active TB cases in the population of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and its associated factors alongside with impact on quality of life of the individuals. The outcomes of the study could be used as evidence to bring reforms in the health and population welfare policies of the province.

## Upcoming events...

### Mark the date!

#### Next Management meeting

The next TBMM Management meeting will be on **Wednesday 10th of February at 11am (UK time)**.

## Acknowledgements...

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