

CORRESPONDENCE

Tuberculosis screening among the bed ridden patients after stroke: a note from a study in a rural province in Thailand

Tuberculosis is an important infection seen worldwide. The patient with immune impairment is at risk to get tuberculosis. Of several groups of patients, the bed ridden patient after stroke is a possible group of patient at risk to get tuberculosis.¹ The bed ridden status can result in poor immunity and the patient can prone to get tuberculosis.² As noted by Matsuo *et al.*, tuberculosis should be an important differential diagnosis of any post stroke patient with unexplained fever and respiratory symptoms.² In the endemic area of tuberculosis, the screening for tuberculosis among at-risk population is necessary.³ As noted by Colli *et al.*, tuberculosis should be included in co-morbidities and differential diagnosis in chronic care of cerebral infarction.⁴

Here, the authors reappraise and discuss a data from tuberculosis active screening program in a rural province of Thailand, a tropical country in Southeast Asia where tuberculosis is highly endemic. WHO noted the need for active tuberculosis management in Indochina including to Thailand.^{3,4} The available public epidemiological reports on tuberculosis active screening in Chiangrai province (http://bie.moph.go.th/e-insreport/file_report/2019-06-24-06-04-50-22.pdf) in year 2018 are retrospectively reappraised. The focused studied area is a rural province of Thailand which border with Lao and Myanmar, known as the Golden Triangle, where the situation of narcotic drug is very well-known.⁴ In this rural province, the active screening for tuberculosis using chest X – ray, sputum microbiology and molecular diagnosis has just been implemented.

Based on the analysis, there are 535 bed ridden patients after stroke who receive screening and the screening show that there are 2 cases with tuberculosis. The incidence rate is equal to 0.37 % (95 % confidence interval = 0.09 % to 1.49 %) or 370 per 100,000 population. This rate is higher than the rate of tuberculosis among local population (185 per 100,000 according to the data by Thai Ministry of Public Health). It can show that the screening for tuberculosis among the bed ridden patients after stroke in our setting should be useful and this should be similarly useful in other settings where tuberculosis are endemic.

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