The changing face of TB treatment for people living with HIV/AIDS

In Africa, TB is one of the most common infections and a leading cause of death among people living with HIV. TB is a curable disease. However, it accounts for two million deaths each year. Among HIV positive people, 15% of deaths are TB related. Poor people are in the majority of the African population affected by TB; 95% of the disease is concentrated in the developing world. Fourteen million people are co-infected with TB/HIV, 10 million of these people reside in Africa. The TB epidemic in Africa is exacerbated by scarcity of resources; neglect, ignorance, poverty and other challenges posed by TB/HIV co-infection. These challenges have collectively compounded TB emergency diagnostics, thereby jeopardising people with HIV. HIV increases the risk of developing TB by 50% and this is the main agent for the global increase in TB prevalence, along with resistance to the most potent multi drug regimes (e.g. isoniazid and rifampicin). Access to health care among the rural communities of sub-Saharan Africa poses the biggest threat to TB control. Most tuberculosis patients only have access to obsolete tests developed over a century ago due to lack of adequate government resources. The study also established that the Kenyan health care providers often use chest x-rays and smear microscopy for TB diagnosis. However, these tests do not capture specific challenges posed by HIV/TB co-infection. A recent report TB surveillance report, the trend is drastically changing courtesy of the Government of Kenya and development partners including WHO.

Biography
Margaret Muthoni Wanyoike has worked with Women Fighting AIDS in Kenya (WOFAK) since 2014. WOFAK is a national non-profit that strives to contribute significantly to national efforts aimed at prevention and to provide comprehensive care and support to women and children living with and affected by HIV and AIDS to enable them lead more wholesome lives. Wanyoike supports community based research and implementation of the HIV management activities in Nairobi county. She also undertakes community mobilization, education and sensitization sessions, and dissemination of health information and materials.

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