



Press Release

Anti-TB Association of Thailand announced the winners of TB Grant 2018

fostering the drive and active movement to end TB in line with WHO guideline

Tuberculosis (TB) has been known as one of the major healthcare issues in Thailand and; therefore, World Health Organization (WHO) has clearly specified a strategic planning to eradicate such disease while simultaneously minimize the occurrence of TB among the world's population to be lower than the ratio of 10:100,000 by 2035. The Ministry of Public Health, Thailand had developed National TB Strategy as an operational framework and key measure to minimize its occurrence which will ultimately lead to its complete elimination. Thailand has been reported as 1 in 14 countries with a high number of TB patients in all 3 groups which comprise of 1) a group of patients with a high rate of TB infection 2) a group of TB patients with HIV infection and 3) a group of patients with multi drug-resistant.

Based on the most recent report of 2018 regarding TB situation in Thailand, approximately 180,000 new and recurrent TB patients were found per year or equivalent to the ratio of 156 per 100,000 population. Among these numbers, 11,000 of them are living with HIV and 3,900 of them are drug-resistance. More importantly, the report also revealed that almost 46,000 patients are currently unable to gain access to service and treatment provided. Besides, Thailand has reported the successful TB cure rate of only 80-85%, which is still below the defined standard of 90%.

Emeritus Professor Arth Nana, M.D., Chairman of the Executive Committee of Anti-TB Association of Thailand under the royal patronage revealed that “The Association had been established and operated since 1935, and it has consistently supported and cooperated with the public health organizations, healthcare professionals as well as other organizations with the common mission to successfully prevent, treat, control and end tuberculosis. Last year, the Association had launched the “**End of TB Thailand Project or End TB Thailand**” while initiating **TB Grant 2018** as one of the main activities to call for innovative TB care/prevention project submission from public and private hospitals nationwide. The project has received a solid support from Sanofi-Aventis (Thailand) Ltd.

With respect to TB Grant 2018, the Association had cooperatively worked with the Advisory Committee of the End TB Thailand Project and many experts accountable for the monitoring and supervision of TB in Thailand to decide and select three winning teams which were granted with the funds. These three teams consist of **1) “The Development of Line App to Enhance an Efficiency of TB treatment Project”** introduced by Sirindhorn Hospital that won the first prize and the other two teams who shared the second prize; namely, “**The Faster You know, the Faster You Can be Cured and Inhibit the Spread of the Disease Project**” initiated by Somdet Phra Sangkharat 17th Hospital, Supanburi and “**The Enhancement of Efficiency in Transferring TB Patients in**



Bangkok Area Project” initiated by AIDS, TB and STD Control Division, Health Department, Bangkok Metropolitan.

Wongwat Lewlak, M.D., the Deputy Director of Health Department, Bangkok Metropolitan revealed the current TB situation in Bangkok as well as its challenge that it is likely that the reoccurrence rate of TB and number of new patient will be high. According to the epidemiology data, it has forecasted that there might be 12,886 TB patients in Bangkok area. Nonetheless, only 12,035 patients have been registered for treatment, and among these numbers, 1,000 patients with potentially TB infection have not been identified. This has posed a challenge in searching for such patients in order that they can be treated to prevent its spread through breath. Another important factor is the tendency that an increasing number of people have immigrated to work in Bangkok yearly. For instance, in 2018, there were 1,123 TB patients found among these immigrants compared to 853 patients in 2017. Therefore, it is time to transmission the TB cycle through early diagnosis.

As for Bangkok, the number of TB patients are relatively high and it poses a challenging task in eradicating TB as specified by WHO due to many inherent factors, for example, population density, overcrowding of transportation, and daily lifestyle of people in Bangkok. In addition, some hospitals are unable to deliver the service to cover the TB treatment under monitoring method where patients will be monitored on medication. These methods have been considered as preventive measures from the root cause and ultimately help save the government’s budget in providing TB treatment. However Bangkok only achieves the successful rate less than 80%.

Sirindhorn Hospital, Medical Service Department, Bangkok, which was granted with the fund as the first prize winner of TB Grant 2018, Chuleekorn So-udorn, M.D., a physician in respiratory tract system disease at Sirindhorn Hospital explained that **“The Development of Line App to Enhance an Efficiency of TB treatment Project”** helps solve one significant problem concerning an access to TB patients and their closed ones. Sirindhorn Hospital had introduced Line App in working cooperatively to enhance the efficiency of communication between doctors, nurses, patients as well as their closed ones. Such system will answer people’s inquiries regarding TB symptoms or potential side effects of the medicine, provide accurate information and understanding to facilitate an accessibility of treatment by employing LINE ID: LINE TB Clinic Sirindhorn Hospital. The hospital has operated its TB clinic as a one-stop service where evaluation and follow-up procedures have been provided to all 246 TB patients who were admitted for treatment in 2018. Of this number, there are 69 percent of TB patients who are currently using Line App and 31 percent who do not. The result had shown that 91% of the patients employing Line App received more efficient treatment whereas those without the use of Line App reported only 76.7% of such treatment efficiency. Consequently, the hospital has acknowledged the benefit of the development of Line App in gaining access to TB patients. Subsequently, the hospital has furthered this project by initiating an automatic warning system to remind patients to take their medicine as well as to remind them of their upcoming visit to the doctor in advance. Such automatic warning system enable the patients to take their medicine on a regular basis while reminding them not to miss their appointment which ultimately fosters patients and their families’ satisfaction and confidence in using Line App to facilitate TB treatment.



As for Somdet Phra Sangkarat 17th Hospital, Supanburi which was awarded with the second best prize in initiating **“The Faster You know, the Faster You Can be Cured and Inhibit the Spread of the Disease Project”** described that for the past 2-3 years, the hospital was confronted with various problems, ranging from inaccessibility to the patients, identifying patients, limited treatment coupled with an increasing number of AIDS patients. Consequently, the hospital has realized the importance of the development of the method in screening TB patients by employing chest x-ray. The hospital provided mobile x-ray vehicle to treat local people in Songpeenong District in 2018 and successfully identified and diagnosed more TB patients from 111 people in 2017 to 125 people in 2018. In addition, the success cure rate was increased to 92.44%, compared to 85.15% while the mortality rate was approximately 2.52% which was lower than the criteria of 5% as specified by the Ministry of Public Health. The hospital also set up TB Working Committee which is responsible for monitoring and following up patients in every step possible and successfully applied “the Model of Songpeenong” with other 100 sub-districts in Supanburi province with the mission to find out patients and inhibit TB spread within the community, minimize the mortality rate and the drug withdrawal rate while increasing the success rate.

Lastly, **“The Enhancement of Efficiency in Transferring TB Patients in Bangkok Area Project”** by TB taskforce of AIDS, TB and STD Control Division, Health Department, Bangkok Metropolitan which jointly won the second best prize, successfully set up TB Referral Center to increase the efficiency of delivering and transferring patients from one clinic to another, both within and outside Bangkok area. Such project helps coordinate with the clinic of origin to deliver or transfer patients to their destination to ensure that they will be consistently treated, to minimize the rate of drug withdrawal during treatment and the rate of patient transfer without acknowledging the treatment result. These endeavors will improve the efficiency of TB treatment in Bangkok area while simultaneously preventing the occurrence of multi drug-resistance and lessening the burden of TB coordinators in various clinics. The previous record has revealed that 92.21% of TB patients were successfully delivered to their clinic of destination. For clinics intend to deliver or transfer TB patients, please contact the call center at 02-860-8208.

With respect to End TB Thailand, the project will further its mission in eradicating TB and will continue to organize activities that emphasize on TB awareness to stimulate healthcare professionals in public and private hospitals as well as related TB care organizations to innovate TB care tools on the principle of “Everything is possible when it comes to TB prevention”.

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