



Research Article

# Predictors for Mortality in Multidrug Resistant Pulmonary Tuberculosis Patients in a South Indian Region

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## I N F O

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## A B S T R A C T

**Background:** Although various factors depicting the mortality in multi drug resistant tuberculosis available there exist no concise data on the factors contributing to mortality globally. The predictors for mortality in multi drug resistant tuberculosis patients vary from localities.

**Objectives:** The study aimed to find the factors contributing to mortality in multi drug resistant tuberculosis in Warangal district of Telangana.

**Materials and Methods:** The prospective study determining the predictors of mortality in multidrug resistant pulmonary tuberculosis patients had a sample size of 296. The follow-up of the patients was conducted for twenty four months to determine the treatment outcome. Patients' mortality was noted from the hospital case sheets, relatives and healthcare facilitators' viz., National tuberculosis elimination program supervisors, Auxiliary Nursing Midwifery in case of death at home. Patients' demography was denoted in number and percentage. Predictors for mortality determined using binary logistic regression analysis. The predictor variables significant with  $p < 0.2$  in univariate analysis were considered for binary logistic regression analysis. The dependent variable was the occurrence of event - mortality and the independent variables chosen from the available literature.

**Results:** The predictors for mortality identified as low body weight of 16-30kg ( $p=0.002$ ; aOR=10.43); comorbids ( $p=0.002$ ; aOR=3.21); severe radiological manifestations at admission to hospital ( $p=0.001$ ; aOR=6.98) and incompletion to treatment ( $p=0.0001$ ; aOR=5.06) in the present study.

**Conclusion:** The factors identified for mortality in multidrug resistant tuberculosis patients are malleable and modifiable with timely follow-up of the patients. The results imply strengthening the anti-TB program with a multidisciplinary approach for a systematic follow-up of the patients and favorable treatment responses.

**Keywords:** Multidrug Resistant Tuberculosis, Mortality, Predictors, Radiological Manifestations, Treatment Adherence



## Introduction

Death by Tuberculosis ranks at the top among other communicable diseases. Globally, the successful treatment outcome in 2019 was 56% for multidrug resistant tuberculosis and 39% for extensively drug resistant tuberculosis. Emergence of drug resistant tuberculosis is a major concern and a threat to public health. Resistance to rifampicin is rifampicin resistance and to both first line drugs isoniazid and rifampicin considered multidrug resistant tuberculosis. These require second line antitubercular drugs to treat for nine to twenty months. Around 10 million fell ill with this infection in 2018 and an estimated 390,000 cases with new diagnosis of multi drug resistant pulmonary tuberculosis noticed. Incidence of rifampicin resistance was noticed in a half million of initial diagnosis of tuberculosis and prevalence in 3.4% to 18% in new and recurrent TB cases in 2018. Similarly, 1.2 million deaths by TB in non-human immunodeficiency and 251,000 in human immunodeficiency reported globally in the same year.<sup>1</sup>

According to the report of the World Health Organization, India accounts for 26% of incidence and ranks first among 30 other high tuberculosis burden countries. India's noticed 28% of resistance to single anti-tuberculosis drug and 6.19% resistance to more than one anti-tubercular drug in its first survey of drug resistance in Tuberculosis (TB) patients.<sup>2</sup> Mortality by TB in India also recorded high with 38% of global deaths. Globally, mortality by TB was doubled in 2020 compared to HIV where COVID-19 had a great impact on the survival of patients diagnosed with TB.<sup>3</sup> Poor treatment outcomes of mortality and loss-to-follow-up with the treatment remain a major challenge in accomplishing the set goal of ZERO TB by 2035.<sup>4</sup> The unsuccessful treatment outcomes signify inefficient organization of anti-TB programme. The determinants denoting the factors for mortality and timely intervention reduce the unfavorable outcomes of treatment.<sup>5</sup> Left untreated it was estimated for an incidence of 98% of deaths by TB in developing countries like India and within a span of twenty years mortality among 35 million people ensured as per the statistics of the World Health Organization.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, an effective investigation into the risk factors for mortality in MDRPTB patients is a prerequisite.

The indicators related to patient and or anti-TB programme contribute to the high mortality.<sup>7</sup> The risk factors predicting the unfavorable outcomes based on patients' related factors include demography, social habits, comorbidities, clinical complications and awareness about the infection among patients.<sup>8</sup> Studies reported the patients at greater risk for DRTB with a past history of TB. Prolonged treatment and the associated adverse drug reactions, toxicities,<sup>9</sup> delay in the diagnosis of infection,<sup>10</sup> lack of self-support and care,

clinical presentation of infection,<sup>11</sup> anemia<sup>12</sup> identified as the risk factors for poor outcomes of the anti-TB treatment. Programmatic management of drug resistant tuberculosis involved in early screening, diagnosis, treatment, monitoring of patients and in special needs striving to prevent the emergence of resistant tuberculosis. Implemented globally observed varied mortality rate across countries and settings among resistant tuberculosis patients.<sup>13</sup>

Factors determining the mortality help to design timely interventions and premature deaths. However, the factors attributing to mortality are undetermined in Warangal district of Telangana state. These considerations envisaged finding the predictors contributing to mortality in multi drug resistant tuberculosis in Warangal district of Telangana

## Materials and Methods

Prior approval from Institutional Review Board (IRB number (JCP/IRB/2019/12)) of Jayamukhi College of Pharmacy obtained for the conduction of study. The study was conducted in Government chest and tuberculosis hospital, Warangal with District Nodal center for Multidrug resistant tuberculosis patients. This prospective study was conducted from February 2018 to December, 2020 in MDRPTB patients.

The sample size was calculated based on the favorable outcome of MDRPTB reported as 74% in India.<sup>14</sup> A proportion of 95% confidence interval and precision of 0.05 was considered for calculating sample size 296. The identified factors contributing to mortality from the previous literature included in the study. The response variable was the time of death. The explanatory variables include gender, locality, co-existing clinical conditions in MDRPTB, treatment duration, prescribed regimen, resistance pattern, weight band, recurrence, radiological grading at admission and adherence to treatment in the present study. The follow-up of the patients was conducted through regular contact and their visit to the hospital for health check-ups and monitoring therapy. Informed consent was obtained from the patients before initiating the study and followed-up till the completion of treatment duration. The follow-up of the individual patient was conducted for twenty four months to determine the treatment outcome.

## Definition of Independent Predictor Variables

The confirmation of anti-TB drug resistance was based on cartridge based nucleic acid amplification test and first line and second-line probe assay techniques and used to describe the resistance pattern in the patients. Gender was categorized as male and female; locality as rural and urban. Presence or absence of comorbidities in MDRPTB, shorter and prolonged treatment duration, regimen prescribed as per WHO guidelines. Patients classified in 16-30kg, 31-45kg or 46-70kg weight band for

dosing the mediations in the regimen. Adherence to anti-tubercular medication verified using the treatment chart and responses from the patients during the treatment tenure. Patients' mortality was noted from the hospital case sheets, relatives and healthcare facilitators' viz., NTEP supervisors, Auxiliary Nursing Midwifery in case of death at home. Recurrence of MDRPTB was identified by the thorough verification of the medical history, usage of anti-TB regimen among patients. Reinfection and relapse considered in recurrence of MDRPTB. Radiological grading identified by the manifestations obtained on the chest X-ray at admission. Involvement of single lung lobe with few interstitial infiltrations, no pleural involvement and absence of cavities categorized as mild. The findings of involvement of unilateral lung, with more interstitial infiltrations, pleural involvement and presence of cavitation's identified as moderate. The illustrations of bilateral lung lobes, alveolar infiltrations, pleural involvement and presence of cavitations indicated as severe grading of lung.

### Statistical Analysis

Patients' demography was denoted in number and percentage. Predictors for mortality determined using binary logistic regression analysis. The predictor variables significant ( $p < 0.2$ ) in univariate analysis were considered for binary logistic regression analysis. The subcategories of the predictors coded as follows: Occurrence of the event - mortality 1, censor 0; Gender - female as 0, male as 1. The other predictor variables in normal values coded as 0 and abnormal as 1 for regression analysis. The data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 25.0.

## Results

### Demography

The study conducted to find the predictors with a follow-up of individual patients between 2018 and 2020 in Warangal District. Majority were male ( $n=207$ ). Patients attended more from rural localities ( $n=235$ ) in the present study. As per the age categories the distribution of patients was as follows: below 20 years ( $n=21$ ); 21-30 years ( $n=57$ ); 31-40 years ( $n=71$ ); 41-50 years ( $n=75$ ); 51-60 years ( $n=45$ ) and above 60 years ( $n=27$ ). Most of the patients belong to the age between 21 to 50 years. Drug resistance to one anti-TB drug was more in the patients. The drug resistance pattern to anti-TB drugs observed resistance to rifampicin resistance in major ( $n=217$ ) followed by fluoroquinolones and second line injectable ( $n=79$ ). Majority patients categorized in low body weight bands of 16-30kg and 31-45kg ( $n=227$ ). Few patients reported comorbid conditions ( $n=77$ ) and diabetes was prominent.

The treatment duration varied based on regimen as 9 months on shorter regimen ( $n=147$ ) for treating rifampicin resistance and 20 months for pre-extensive drug resistance ( $n=99$ ) and conventional therapy ( $n=50$ ).

The shorter and conventional regimens include injectable and pre-extensive drug resistance with all oral anti-TB medications. The radiographs were categorized as mild ( $n=62$ ); moderate ( $n=107$ ) and severe ( $n=127$ ). The severe manifestations include pleural involvement, cavitations, extensive infiltrations, alveolar infiltrations, hyperinflation, pleural effusion and bilateral lung involvement. Follow-up of the patients noticed few ( $n=38$ ) to derelict the treatment. Patients neglected the treatment by the completion of intensive phase and or when free from the signs and symptoms of the infection. The event of mortality observed in  $n=69$  MDRPTB patients during the study period. There were no significant differences in the distribution of patients in the variables with recurrence and duration of treatment. The details of demography and clinical findings were given in Table 1.

### Predictors of Mortality in MDRPTB Patients

The Univariate analysis considered the factors with a significance of  $p < 0.2$  and identified the variables treatment months, comorbid, weight band, radiograph and adherence to treatment. Univariate analysis of the predictors was given in Table 2. The factors identified in univariate analysis chosen into binary logistic regression analysis with the significance  $p < 0.05$ . The model fitness was determined by omnibus test ( $p=0.0001$ ) and Hosmer and Lemeshow test ( $p=0.828$ ). The improvement in analyzing the predictors determined by classification table noticed 89.9%. The accuracy of the model was 89.9% with a specificity of 99.6% and sensitivity of 58%.

Binary logistic regression identified weight band 16-30kg, severe manifestations of radiograph, non-adherence to medication and comorbid conditions along with MDRPTB as the significant predictors. Binary logistic regression analysis predicting the independent variables for mortality was given in Table 2. Patients with comorbid in MDRPTB had 2.43-fold risk compared to MDRPTB (a OR=2.43, 95% CI=1-5.89). MDRPTB patients in the low body weight range of 16-30kgs had 8.05 fold increased risk than the patients in other weight bands of 31-45kg and 46-70kg (a OR=8.05, CI= 1.46-44.23). Similarly, radiograph with severe manifestations associated with a 13.69 fold increased risk compared to mild and moderate chest X-ray findings (a OR=13.69, CI=2.50-74.91). Patients non-compliant to treatment was associated with an increased risk to mortality of 309.25 fold, compared to the patients adherent to treatment (a OR=309.25, CI=36.12- 2647.3).

**Table 1. Demographic Description of Patients for Survival Analysis in MDRPTB Patients**

Category	Subcategory	n (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	p-value
Gender	Male	207 (69.93)	47.04	0.0001
	Female	089 (30.06)		
Locality	Rural	230 (77.71)	90.86	0.0001
	Urban	066 (22.29)		
Resistance	One drug	211 (71.28)	53.63	0.0001
	Two drugs	85 (28.72)		
Weight band	16-30	16 (5.41)	222.21	0.0001
	31-45	218 (73.64)		
	46-70	62 (20.94)		
Comorbids	Present	80 (27.03)	62.48	0.0001
	Absent	216 (72.97)		
Reoccurrence	Yes	143 (48.31)	0.33	0.56
	No	153 (51.68)		
Treatment months	Shorter	147 (49.66)	0.01	0.907
	Prolonged	149 (50.33)		
Treatment adherence	Persistent	226 (76.35)	82.26	0.0001
	Interrupted	70 (23.64)		
Radiograph	Mild	67 (22.63)	17.48	0.0001
	Moderate	104 (35.13)		
	Severe	125 (42.22)		
Treatment regimen	Pre-XDR BDQ	96 (32.43)	99.93	0.0001
	Shorter	131 (44.25)		
	Conventional	51 (17.22)		
	Mixed	18 (6.08)		
Mortality	No	227 (76.68)	84.33	0.0001
	Yes	69 (23.31)		

**Table 2. Predicting Survival Probabilities in MDRPTB Patients**

Clinical parameter	Subcategory	Crude Odds ratio	Confidence interval		Sig.	Adjusted Odds ratio	Confidence interval		Sig.
			LL	UL			LL	UL	
Gender	Male	0.89	0.50	1.60	0.70				
Comorbids	Yes	1.77	0.99	3.16	0.05	3.21	1.55	6.63	0.002
Treatment months	9 months	0.47	0.27	0.82	0.008	0.41	0.17	0.96	0.04
Locality	Rural	0.93	0.49	1.77	0.83				
Resistance to TB treating drugs	>1 drug	1.21	0.68	2.18	0.50				
Weight band	16-30	11.25	3.20	39.47	0.0001	10.43	2.42	44.84	0.002
	31-45	2.06	0.92	4.61	0.07	1.65	0.66	4.12	0.28
Reoccurrence	Yes	1.53	0.89	2.64	0.12	0.64	0.28	1.49	0.31



Radiograph	Moderate	2.86	0.91	8.97	0.07	2.00	0.58	6.91	0.27
	Severe	10.15	3.47	29.67	0.0001	6.98	2.15	22.58	0.001
Treatment regimen	Shorter	0.63	0.33	1.21	0.17				
	Conventional	1.93	0.93	4.00	0.07				
Adherence to treatment	No	6.19	3.41	11.24	0.0001	5.06	2.57	9.97	0.0001

Note: LL - Lower Limit; UL- Upper Limit

## Discussion

Conceptualization of predictors for mortality provided an assessment on the prevailing risk factors in multidrug resistant tuberculosis patients. The present study illustrated the predictors for mortality in Warangal region of Telangana.

The core plan of National Strategic Plan- NSP (2017-2025) is to End TB by 2025 by improving the health care services in screening, diagnosis and treatment. Early diagnosis, treatment of active TB patients and achieving sustainable development by 2025 is a primary concern of NSP. Effective TB Preventive Treatment (TPT) and its programmatic management is a strategy in preventing drug resistant tuberculosis. The present study noticed priority to engage the community and implementation of information and communication technology to motivate the patients adherent to treatment.<sup>15</sup> Programmatic Management of Drug Resistant Tuberculosis (PMDT) addressed access to special health care in the patients with comorbidities and to ensure the awareness of the drug resistant tuberculosis infection. PMDT assured guidance and patient centric mentoring needs to be addressed satisfactorily.<sup>16</sup>

The factors such as non-compliance to treatment, severe involvement of lung infection, co-existing clinical conditions and low weight band of 16-30kg were identified as the predictors for mortality. Radiological manifestations are more sensible in the diagnosis of TB than signs and symptoms.<sup>17</sup> Severe lung manifestations, cavitation in radiograph considered as the predictors for unsuccessful outcome of the anti-TB therapy<sup>18</sup> confirmed in the current investigation. Studies reported 3+ bacillary loads in cavitory presentations reduce the favorable outcome.<sup>19</sup> Increased bacillary count, bilateral cavitations reduce the influx of drugs into the cavitation and increase the chances of relapse, resistance, reinfection thereby leading to failure of anti-TB treatment.<sup>20</sup>

Weight below normal was considered as an anticipator for poor treatment outcome and all-cause mortality for MDRTB patients.<sup>21</sup> Low body mass index represents malnutrition with severe clinical presentation, mostly positive sputum. Malnutrition in TB reduces the antibodies, immune responses and is vulnerable to other infections.<sup>22</sup> TB bacilli catabolize energy sources utilizing carbohydrates, lipids and

assimilate amino acids from host.<sup>23</sup> The YY peptide hormone increases in TB infection limiting food intake and reducing appetite.<sup>24</sup> Delayed improvement in BMI characterized by comorbidities, psychological illness, noncompliance to treatment and poor response to treatment in MDRPTB patients. Studies suggest a delayed increase in BMI, a potential biomarker in predicting the treatment outcome.<sup>25</sup> Improvement in weight was the useful predictor for determining the response to treatment. A five percent gain in weight from the baseline by third month after the initiation of treatment resulted in favorable outcome of the patients.<sup>26</sup> Being an easy measure of weight should be evaluated every month.

Current study noticed very few patients with comorbid and found it as a predictor for mortality. Diabetic patients predominate in this investigation. Anemia was prevalent in 90% of MDRPTB patients but not considered as a risk factor for mortality. Type 2 diabetes, anemia was noteworthy among the patients similar to one another study.<sup>27</sup> The combination of metabolic disorders, hyperglycemia and bacterial genetics impair the functions of phagocytosis, chemotaxis and inflammatory mediators.<sup>28</sup> This results in unfavorable treatment outcomes and at risk of failure in therapy, relapse and has an association in development of MDRPTB, mortality.<sup>29</sup> Comorbidities in MDRPTB considered a challenge in the management of the patient. Such conditions are in need of prompt follow-up for the beneficial treatment outcomes.

Non-compliance to the MDRPTB treatment identified as the predictor for mortality in this study. Adherence to treatment was minimal during the continuation phase of treatment in few patients. The same evidenced as the factor contributing to the poor outcomes in previous studies and at risk for reinfection, relapse and mortality.<sup>30</sup> Demography, economical status, medical support, severity of the infection and patient factors influence the adherence to treatment.<sup>31</sup> Direct observation of treatment and by the family remain a pillar for treatment support in MDRPTB patients. Information and communication technology enabled monitoring the adherence to treatment was acceptable by the patients through the audible and visual intimations proved to improve the compliance to treatment.<sup>32</sup>

These findings have been a major challenge for beneficial

outcomes and require a reinforcement of improved social assistance for psychological support, patient counseling, rehabilitation of persons addicted to alcohol in the anti-TB program. National strategic plan set goal of End TB by 2025 can be achieved through effective communication between the health care providers, patients and their family members. Close monitoring of patients and implementation of interventions in need helps to improve the adherence to treatment and improve the success rate of anti-TB programs. The findings reflect an improvement in the quality of healthcare services, pharmaceutical TB care.

### Conclusion

The burden of mortality in multi drug resistance tuberculosis patients evidenced low body weight of 16-30kg, non-compliance to treatment, comorbid and intensified lung manifestations at admission. The identified predictors for mortality were modifiable and malleable on prompt follow-up of the patients. The results imply strengthening the anti-TB program with a multidisciplinary approach for a systematic follow-up of the patients and favorable treatment responses.

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