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Title: Knowledge and practices of hospital employees on tuberculosis

Mr. Alexandros 6010 Charisis charisisalex@yahoo.gr¹, Dr. Athima 6017 Tatsioni atatsioni@gmail.com MD², Dr. Athina 6034 Gogali athenagogali@yahoo.com MD¹, Ms. Anna 6041 Efthymiou charisisalex@yahoo.gr¹, Dr. Christos 6042 Katsanos eprevezi@cc.uoi.gr¹, Dr. George 6045 Daskalopoulos gdaskalo@cc.uoi.gr MD¹, Prof. Dr Stavros 6046 Constantopoulos eprevezi@cc.uoi.gr MD¹ and Dr. Athanasios 6047 Konstantinidis athkon@yahoo.com MD¹. ¹ Pneumonology Department, University Hospital of Ioannina, Ioannina, Greece, 45500 and ² Department of Family Medicine, University Hospital of Ioannina, Ioannina, Greece, 45500 .

Body: Background: Barriers to implement prevention strategies for tuberculosis (TB) in hospitals may result from inadequate personnel knowledge and practices. Purpose: To assess the knowledge and practices of hospital employees on TB in NW Greece. Methods: A health visitor administered a structured questionnaire to employees in Ioannina University Hospital. Questions were related to knowledge on TB transmission route, TB infectious types, preventive measures adopted during the management of a suspected case, and suggested placement for a patient with active TB. Results: Questionnaires were completed by 789 employees including 192 physicians, 436 nurses, 67 technicians, 72 assistants, and 22 administrators. Mean age was 41.3±7.8 years. Most (but not all) recognized saliva drops as transmission route (86.1%), and pulmonary TB as infectious (88.6%). Few recognized laryngeal TB as infectious (18.6%). Among 491, who had managed a suspected case, 75.8% used regular masks and 4.7% high protection masks. Employees who worked for at least 20 years were more likely to report regular mask (OR 1.7 95%, CI 1.1-2.7; P=0.02) and less likely high protection mask use (OR 0.3, 95% CI 0.1-0.8; P=0.01) when compared with employees who started working during the last 5 years. For newly diagnosed patients, 63.6% of employees supported care in special infectious disease units, while 31.7% care in a regular hospital ward, in isolation. Conclusion: Employees generally recognized that TB is transmitted by saliva drops and that infectious TB included pulmonary but not laryngeal type. Few of them who managed suspected cases used high protection mask. The majority supported that care to patients should be offered in infectious disease units.