

# Treatment seeking behavior of diabetic patients with special emphasis on follow-up in the public health facilities in Pudukottai District, Tamilnadu, India

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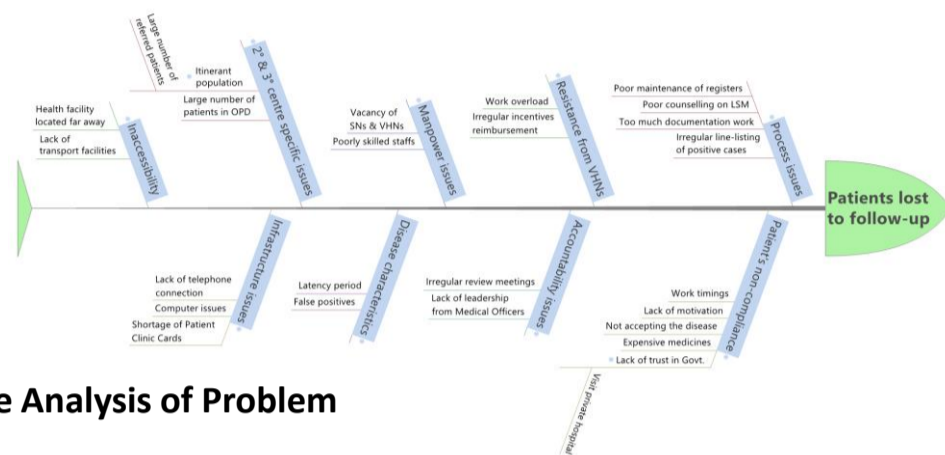
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## BACKGROUND

- To tackle the rising burden of Non Communicable Diseases (NCD) which are leading cause of death (60%) and disability in India<sup>1</sup>, the Government of Tamil Nadu through World Bank aided Tamil Nadu Health Systems implemented NCD Intervention Programme in 32 districts of the state in 2011.
- Opportunistic screening of hypertension, diabetes mellitus (DM), breast cancer and cervical cancer are done for individuals 30 years and above. For diabetes, screening is done by Random Blood Sugar test and diagnosis by Fasting and 2hr-Post-prandial Blood Sugar tests.<sup>2</sup>

## PROBLEM STATEMENT & ANALYSIS

- More than 25 thousand people were screened and started on treatment in Pudukottai district, however, the information on continued follow-up and treatment is limited.



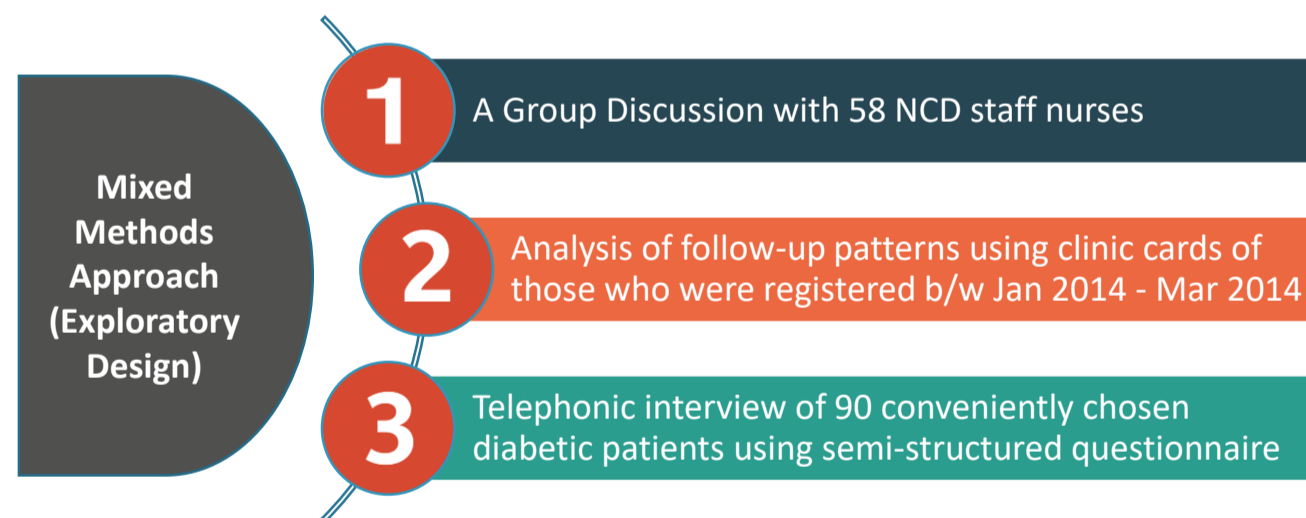
## OBJECTIVES

- To learn about treatment seeking behavior of patients from the perspective of key service providers – NCD staff nurses
- To identify the proportion of patients in different patterns of follow-up for treatment of DM in the health facility where they got enrolled
- To find out the motivating factors for patients who are on regular follow-up for treatment of diabetes mellitus.
- To find out the major reasons of irregular follow-up or lost to follow-up during treatment of diabetes mellitus in the government health facility.

## STUDY AREA

- 13 General Hospitals, 13 Block PHCs, 41 Adl. PHCs & 1 Urban PHC in Pudukottai District, Tamil Nadu, India

## METHODOLOGY



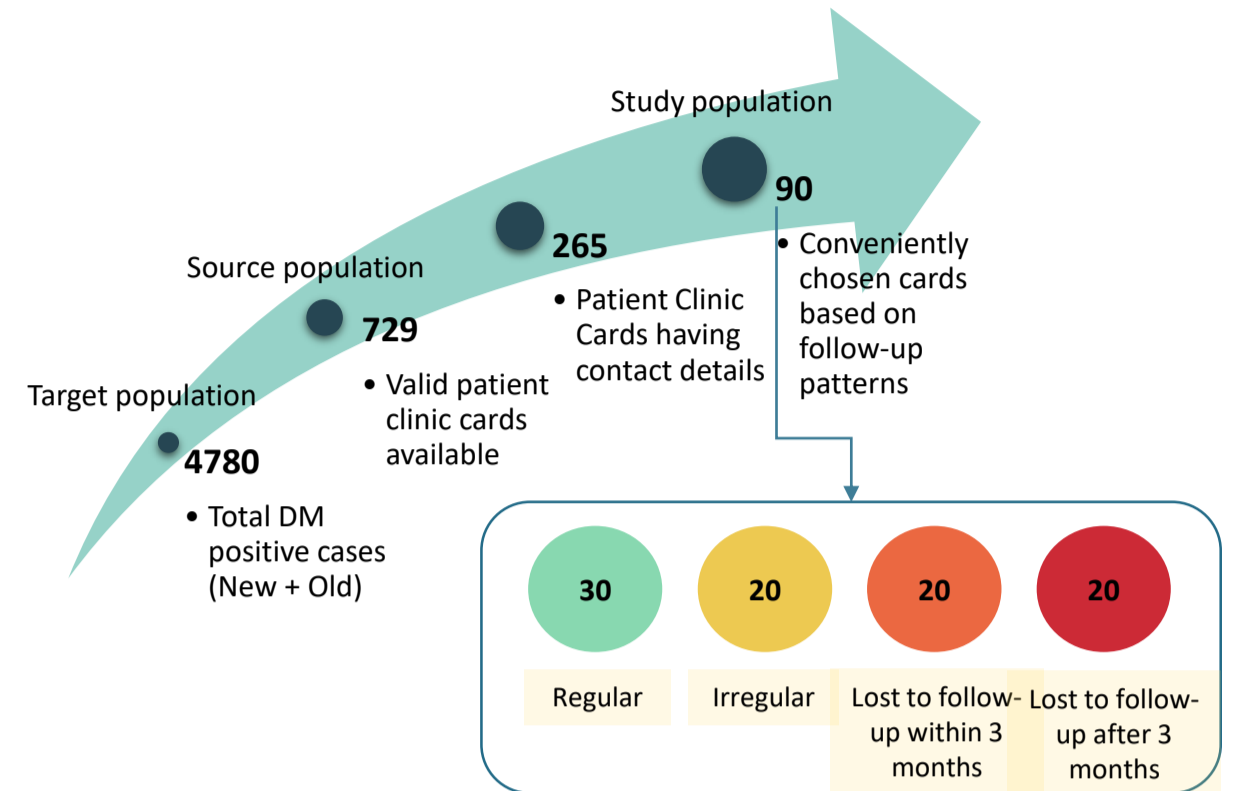
Group discussion with NCD Staff Nurses

Valid treatment cards registered during Jan 2014 to Mar 2014 (N=729) were categorized into four, based on different follow-up patterns:

- Regular:** Patients who visited at least once in two months during the period Jan 2014 to Apr 2015 to receive drugs
- Irregular:** Patients who visited, but did not appear for three or more consecutive months in between the period from Jan 2014 to Apr 2015 to receive drugs
- Lost to follow-up within 3 months:** Patients who visited in first 3 months after registration but did not appear after that in the period Jan 2014 to Apr 2015

- Lost to follow-up after 3 months:** Patients who visited more than 3 months after registration but did not appear after that in the period Jan 2014 to Apr 2015

## Selection of sample for analysis of follow-up patterns and telephonic interview

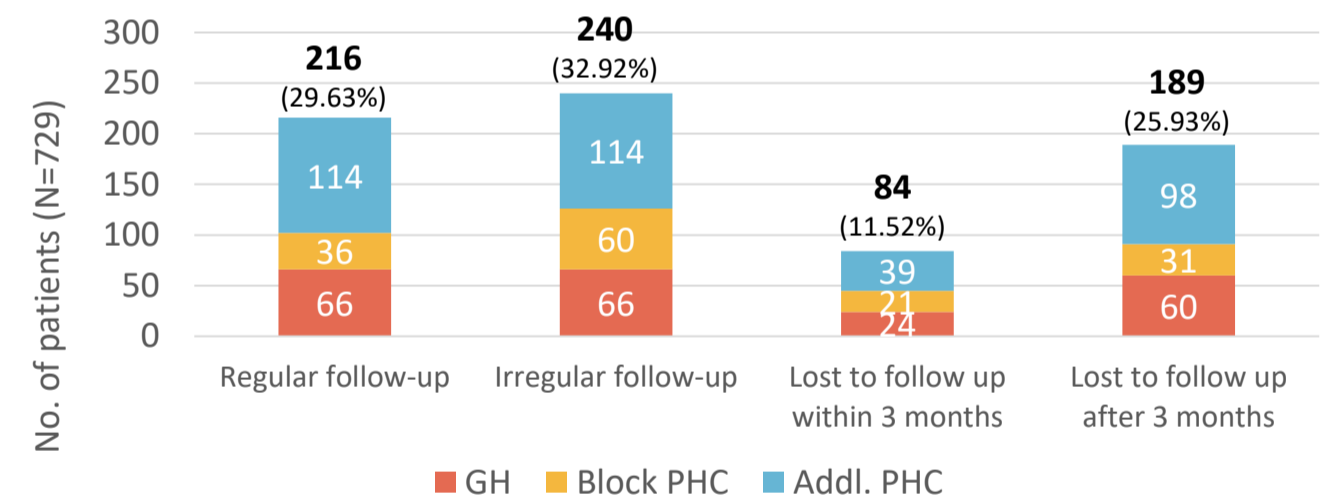


## RESULTS

### 1. Group Discussion with NCD staff nurses

- "Patients worry about losing one day work salary if they have to visit health facility in the morning hours. So they appear only after their conditions worsen."
- "Old patients are not able to visit, and therefore they send a proxy to receive drugs. Proxies are not accounted and considered as defaulters"
- "Some patients visit two or more health facility to receive drugs. So the patient gets registered twice and becomes irregular in follow-up in both facilities."

### 2. Analysis of monthly follow-up visits using patient clinic cards



### 3. Interview of diabetic patients (n=90)

#### a. Average cost for travel to health facility (up & down)

Follow-up Category	Average Cost
Regular	9.38
Irregular	18.75
Lost within 3 months	15.20
Lost after 3 months	23.33

#### b. Main reasons for different patterns of follow-up

- Regular:** "If I don't take medicine regularly, then my health condition worsens" (60%)
- Irregular:** "Medicines from govt. facility are poor in quality, so I take medicine from outside" (30%)
- Lost within 3 months:** "I visited the village temporarily" (35%)
- Lost after 3 months:** "I visit only when I have problems" (20%)

#### c. 46.7% of irregular & lost to follow-up patients (n=60) visit other health facilities for treatment

## CONCLUSION

- As per records, only 30% of patients are regular on follow-up
- Outpatient Department timings and cost of travel are few important factors determining regularity of visits. Patients have tendency to visit hospital only when conditions worsen.
- Though 70% (N=729) of patients are irregular and lost to follow-up, 46.7% (n=60) of interviewed patients seek treatment from other facilities.

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**References:** 1. World Health Organisation. WHO - NCD Country Profiles 2014 – India; 2. Source: www.tnhsp.org