

# BR-01 Parents' Experiences and Perspectives Towards Tuberculosis Treatment Success among Children in Klang and Petaling Districts of Selangor, Malaysia: A Qualitative Study



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## Introduction

The trends of tuberculosis (TB) treatment success rate among children in Malaysia plateaued at 90% from 2014 to 2017. Malaysia sets a higher target to be achieved in line with an affordable, accessible and holistic approach in managing TB among children (1). This study aims to explore the parents' experiences and perspectives towards achieving treatment success among children who were diagnosed with TB in two districts in Selangor, Malaysia.

## Materials and methods

The study was conducted using phenomenology design via an in-depth interview (IDI) with the primary caregiver of children with TB disease. The participants were purposely sampled via MyTB v2.1 database in Klang and Petaling Districts of Selangor; aged above 18 years and having a child who has completed treatment or still taking medication. Data collection was conducted from January to February 2020. Sample size determination was according to saturation theory. Participants' experiences were explored according to the Health Belief Model theory, as shown in Figure 1 (2). Written consent was taken from the participant before the IDI session. R-based qualitative data analysis (RQDA) package was used to perform the thematic analysis. This study obtained the ethical approval from the Research Ethics Committee UiTM, and the Medical Research Ethics Committee, Ministry of Health of Malaysia.

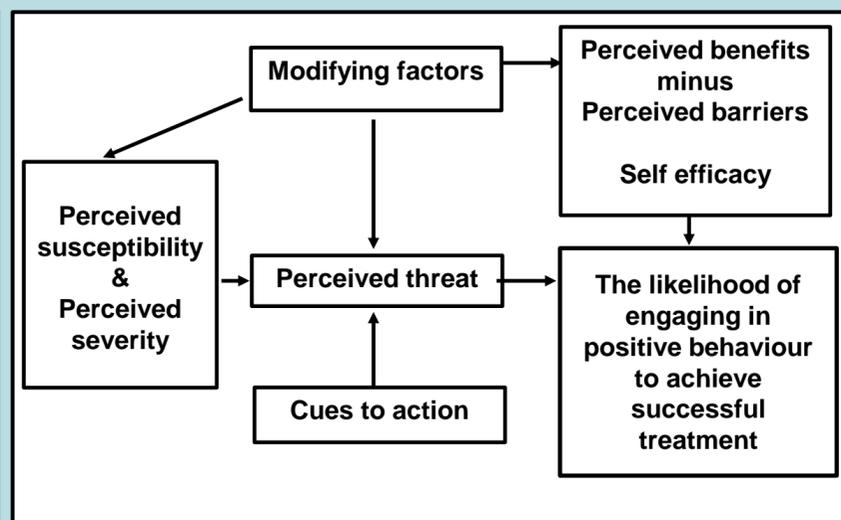


Figure 1: Health Belief Model

## Results

Table 1: The socio-demographic of the participants and their child; N=15

Characteristics of the participants and their child	Number of participants; n (%)
Age of participants	
20-29	3 (20.0)
30-39	6 (40.0)
40-49	4 (26.7)
50-59	2 (13.3)
Education status	
Tertiary	7 (46.7)
Secondary	8 (53.3)
Age of child based on MyTB v2.1 database	
1-4 years	7 (46.7)
5-14 years	8 (53.3)
Type of TB	
EPTB	3 (20.0)
PTB	12 (80.0)
Treatment outcomes	
Success	12 (80.0)
Still on treatment	3 (20.0)

Table 2: Summary of the thematic analysis

Themes	Sub-themes
Trust to the healthcare services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acceptance</li> <li>Self-efficacy</li> <li>Holistic care</li> <li>Perceived benefits</li> </ul>
Motivation to take or continue treatment for her child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support from the family</li> <li>Healthcare workers (HCWs) support</li> <li>Convenience healthcare services</li> <li>Community support</li> <li>Personal strength</li> <li>Child character</li> </ul>

### Selected participants' quotations:

"I think that those who have been infected with TB disease, the only way to cure the disease is by taking the medication as instructed by the doctor and remains self-disciplined throughout the treatment phase."

"My mother and I took a turn to accompany my ill daughter in the hospital. I went to work in the morning and looked after her in the evening. [...] My advice for those who will be going through this similar situation, you must remain calm and do not overstress yourself. If we are having low mood and always under pressure, we cannot help our child. We must be a strong mother. Just listen carefully to the doctor and follow their advice as the doctor said TB could be cured. [...] I will bring her medication every time we were away from home, and she definitely will be given the TB medication on time."

## Discussion

Trust in TB medication forced participants to face the daily challenges of administering the medication. These parents gained knowledge of TB disease, which strengthened their faith in the healthcare services offered. Various previous studies supported on lack of TB knowledge among caregivers and patients that may result in a poor outcome (3,4). Besides that, seeking alternative medicine or over the counter medicine due to mild symptoms and any distrust in the public healthcare system may result in a delay of the appropriate treatment (4,5).

Strong family support is needed to motivate the main caregivers, as observed in previous studies, including the history of TB disease among the family members (5,6,8). A mutual relationship between caregiver and HCWs had increased the treatment adherence of their patients (7,8). The flexibility of the services is also mentioned in the previous study and included in a convenience healthcare service (8).

## Conclusion

TB treatment success among children with TB can be achieved when parents develop trust in their TB healthcare providers and have self-motivation to engage in the full treatment regime. These results will inform the TB program manager to strengthen the holistic approach and identified the motivational factors among parents of children with TB disease for treatment adherence.

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