

Road to Results

ACHIEVING SUCCESS STEP BY STEP

ZdravPlus Targets Teens in Kazakhstan with Anti-TB Campaign

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Tuberculosis (TB) kills more youths and adults than any other infection worldwide, with one person dying from the disease every 10 seconds¹, despite the fact that if treated properly and in time, virtually all cases are curable. In Kazakhstan, according to government sources, the rate of morbidity increased by 8.6 percent in 2000 alone². Recognizing the need to address this escalating rate of TB morbidity, the Government of Kazakhstan joined forces with USAID and its implementing partners to conduct a variety of programs to fight TB. A critical part of this implementation plan was to ensure that the population takes their share of responsibility for preventing and controlling TB. During 2001 and 2002, USAID-funded ZdravPlus and counterparts designed an innovative health promotion campaign titled "TB Can Be Eradicated" which aimed to increase knowledge of the signs and symptoms of TB, and generate more responsible practices towards seeking treatment. A third aim of the campaign was to inform the population that TB examinations tests and treatment are free — an important factor given transitional economic hardship.

The campaign, which was held in Almaty and Astana in spring 2001, and Karaganda and Semipalatinsk in spring 2002, was explicitly aimed at teenagers. According to the National TB Center, the probability of infection among groups of teenagers aged 14–18 who have been in contact with a person who has active TB is almost two times higher than among 'contact' adults and/or children. This may be a result of teenagers spending a lot of time together indoors, such as in school, and on public transportation without adequate ventilation.

Although the success of such a campaign is difficult to measure, the campaign is known to have reached over 100,000 teenagers between 14 and 18 years of age, and many more adults.

Results from a knowledge, attitudes and practice survey held in ZdravPlus' two pilot rayons in Karaganda before and after the campaign, show that knowledge about TB among teenagers improved. There was: (1) a decrease in respondents aged 15–19 in Karaganda who believed that TB could be transmitted through blood (from 42 percent in January to 24 percent in October/November); and (2) an increase in respondents aged 15–19 who understood that the following were signs of TB: (a) coughing for more than three weeks (from 50 to 60 percent), (b) blood in sputum (from 17 to 32 percent), and (c) persistent night sweating (from 0 to 20 percent).

During each campaign, ZdravPlus-designed materials were disseminated in both Russian and Kazakh, including TV and radio dramas, and 30-second TV and radio spots on the signs and symptoms of TB. In addition, print materials specially designed to appeal to teenagers were developed, including a poster using the word "tuberculosis" as a mnemonic for the signs and symptoms of TB (such as temperature, night sweats, and persistent cough); TB leaflets and



The USAID-funded ZdravPlus Program provides technical assistance and training to improve the health

of Central Asian populations by improving health delivery systems

¹ WHO Global Program on TB control 1999, www.who.ch/gtb

² From 141 per 100,000 people in 1998 to 153.2 per 100,000 people in 2000. *Annual Statistics Report*, Draft, 2000, Agency of Health Care of RK

rulers, bags and badges bearing the motto “TB can be cured” were also created.

The five-week campaign in Karaganda was typical of the other campaigns, and was kick-started when four of the most popular local newspapers printed the TB crossword poster. As with the other campaigns, the TV and radio spots and plays were broadcast on local television and radio and in schools, bazaars and factories, several times a day.

Throughout the campaign, nurses from Karaganda’s twenty-four FGPs eagerly hung campaign posters in buses, trolleybuses, shops, drugstores, and other public places frequented by teenagers and made sure that there was plenty of information available about TB at their own clinics. The TB dispensary helped distribute posters among the population.

FGP and school nurses held TB sessions in schools for grades 9–11. At these sessions, they gave lectures on the signs and symptoms of TB and handed out TB leaflets, rulers and badges. They also played the TB radio spot and gave pupils an empty TB crossword form to fill in. Of a total population of over 400,000 in Karaganda, some 50,000 young people were reached.

In early April, star students from each school were invited to a special event entitled, “How I Fought TB” in Karaganda’s central park. Students, nurses, and the general population were extremely enthusiastic; the sun shone and the turnout was good. The event even received a mention on national TV. The day was comprised of fun and interesting activities including singing, energetic team games, and a quiz show. ZdravPlus and counterparts distributed a range of prizes during the event for star students from the TB lessons, including Aqua Park tickets for teenagers and theater tickets and medical equipment for the nurses who conducted the most innovative educational activities and reached the most people.

According to doctors in Karaganda, they saw a marked increase in teenagers visiting health clinics for TB consultations after the campaign took place. Natalya Dusembaeva, Head of the Department of the Oblast Infectious Clinical Hospital, said, “The

campaign helped children to understand the importance of seeking assistance if they thought they had TB. To us, this work was invaluable.”

In Semipalatinsk, the populace was characteristically dynamic. Twenty-four students from the Eurasian Humanitarian College joined together and appealed to the City Center for Healthy Lifestyles for training on TB. During the weekend of World TB Day, which coincided with the Festival of Nauryz (Central Asian New Year in March), the students distributed materials on TB throughout the city. They produced a play on TB for the Nauryz celebrations and posted information on TB in buses and in other public places. ZdravPlus was delighted with the imagination and interest shown by these students and worked with them to provide materials for dissemination; they were given T-shirts and baseball caps with TB logos to wear so that the students could be easily recognized around the city.

When the three-day campaign in Semipalatinsk came to an end, there was overwhelming demand from both the students and the City Health Department to continue the campaign. Based on this demand and the general enthusiasm, ZdravPlus decided to conduct TB classes for teenagers in Semipalatinsk, as in Karaganda.

In total, the various campaigns were seen as a considerable achievement. The well thought out strategy meant that the target audience was comprehensively reached. In addition, the campaign brought various bodies to work together such as the Center for Healthy Lifestyles, ZdravPlus, Project HOPE, local TB Centers, and local government departments. Jointly, they were able to implement the campaign far more effectively, and partnerships for future collaboration were both established and maintained. The results of the knowledge, attitude and practice survey suggest that the campaigns really did have a positive effect on teenagers’ knowledge of the signs and symptoms of TB, and anecdotal evidence suggests that heightened awareness amongst teenagers has led to increased visits to doctors, so that people with TB can be treated and, more importantly, cured as a result.

For more information

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