

**MITIGATING THE STIGMA ASSOCIATED WITH TUBERCULOSIS****MITIGANDO O ESTIGMA ASSOCIADO À TUBERCULOSE****MITIGANDO EL ESTIGMA ASOCIADO A LA TUBERCULOSIS**Alcione Basílio de Abreu¹

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ABSTRACT

This article addresses the social stigma associated with tuberculosis (TB) and its influence on patients, their families, and communities, impacting the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of the disease. It highlights the historical origins of stigma, stemming from a lack of understanding about the transmission and causes of the disease, associated with unfavorable socioeconomic conditions and representations in popular culture. Stigma manifests in various ways, including social isolation, discrimination, negative stereotypes, and delays in diagnosis and treatment. These manifestations have profound impacts on the quality of life and physical and emotional health of patients. To combat stigma, comprehensive strategies are proposed, such as public education, promotion of empathy, community engagement, universal access to healthcare, and psychosocial support. These approaches aim to challenge misconceptions, reduce social isolation, strengthen emotional support, and promote a more compassionate understanding of the disease. The article highlights the importance of treatment adherence and emotional support for patients, emphasizing that support from healthcare professionals, family, and the community is crucial in addressing treatment challenges and promoting better long-term health outcomes. It is concluded that mitigating tuberculosis stigma requires collective and ongoing effort, with an integrated, patient-centered approach. By promoting empathy, understanding, and support, it is possible to create a more inclusive and supportive environment, advancing towards a society where health and well-being are accessible to all.

KEYWORDS: Tuberculosis. Social stigma. Health impact. Combat strategies. Treatment adherence.**RESUMO**

O artigo aborda o estigma social associado à tuberculose (TB) e sua influência nos pacientes, suas famílias e comunidades, afetando a prevenção, diagnóstico e tratamento da doença. Destacam-se as origens históricas do estigma, que remontam à falta de compreensão sobre a transmissão e causas da doença, associadas a condições socioeconômicas desfavoráveis e representações na cultura popular. O estigma se manifesta de várias maneiras, incluindo isolamento social, discriminação, estereótipos negativos e atraso no diagnóstico e tratamento. Essas manifestações têm impactos profundos na qualidade de vida e na saúde física e emocional dos pacientes. Para combater o estigma, são propostas estratégias abrangentes, como educação pública, promoção da empatia, envolvimento da comunidade, acesso universal aos cuidados de saúde e apoio psicossocial. Essas abordagens visam desafiar os equívocos, reduzir o isolamento social, fortalecer o apoio emocional e promover uma compreensão mais compassiva da doença. O artigo destaca a importância da adesão ao tratamento e do suporte emocional para os pacientes, enfatizando que o apoio de profissionais de saúde, familiares e comunidade é crucial para enfrentar os desafios do tratamento e promover melhores resultados de saúde a longo prazo. Conclui-se que mitigar o estigma da tuberculose requer um esforço coletivo e contínuo, com uma abordagem integrada e centrada no paciente. Ao promover a empatia, compreensão e apoio, é possível criar um ambiente mais inclusivo e solidário, avançando em direção a uma sociedade onde a saúde e o bem-estar sejam acessíveis a todos.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Tuberculose. Estigma social. Impacto na saúde. Estratégias de combate. Adesão ao tratamento.

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RESUMEN

Este artículo aborda el estigma social asociado a la tuberculosis (TB) y su influencia en los pacientes, sus familias y comunidades, afectando la prevención, diagnóstico y tratamiento de la enfermedad. Se destacan los orígenes históricos del estigma, que se remontan a la falta de comprensión sobre la transmisión y causas de la enfermedad, asociadas a condiciones socioeconómicas desfavorables y representaciones en la cultura popular. El estigma se manifiesta de varias maneras, incluyendo el aislamiento social, la discriminación, los estereotipos negativos y el retraso en el diagnóstico y tratamiento. Estas manifestaciones tienen impactos profundos en la calidad de vida y la salud física y emocional de los pacientes. Para combatir el estigma, se proponen estrategias integrales, como la educación pública, la promoción de la empatía, la participación de la comunidad, el acceso universal a la atención médica y el apoyo psicosocial. Estos enfoques tienen como objetivo desafiar los equívocos, reducir el aislamiento social, fortalecer el apoyo emocional y promover una comprensión más compasiva de la enfermedad. El artículo destaca la importancia de la adhesión al tratamiento y el apoyo emocional para los pacientes, enfatizando que el apoyo de los profesionales de la salud, la familia y la comunidad es crucial para enfrentar los desafíos del tratamiento y promover mejores resultados de salud a largo plazo. Se concluye que mitigar el estigma de la tuberculosis requiere un esfuerzo colectivo y continuo, con un enfoque integrado y centrado en el paciente. Al promover la empatía, comprensión y apoyo, es posible crear un ambiente más inclusivo y solidario, avanzando hacia una sociedad donde la salud y el bienestar sean accesibles para todos.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Tuberculosis. Estigma social. Impacto en la salud. Estrategias de combate. Adhesión al tratamiento.

INTRODUCTION

Tuberculosis (TB) is an age-old disease that, despite medical and technological advancements, continues to pose a significant challenge to public health in many parts of the world (Souza *et al.*, 2015). In addition to the clinical and epidemiological aspects of the disease, there is an equally relevant yet often neglected component: the social stigma associated with tuberculosis. This stigma can have devastating impacts on affected individuals, their families, and communities, negatively influencing the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of the disease (Touso *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, it is crucial to explore effective strategies to mitigate this stigma and promote an environment of empathy and support for those living with tuberculosis.

In this article, we will examine the stigma associated with tuberculosis, exploring its origins, manifestations, and impacts on patients' lives. Additionally, we will discuss the importance of promoting empathy and support as essential elements in combating stigma and improving the well-being of individuals affected by the disease. By adopting a patient-centered and community-based approach, we can work together to overcome tuberculosis stigma and create a more inclusive and supportive environment for all.

According to Ordinance No. 1271, dated June 6, 2014, tuberculosis is one of the mandatory notifiable diseases throughout the national territory and must be reported through the Notifiable Diseases Information System (SINAN). According to (Rodrigues da Motta *et al.*, 2021), it is essential to encourage the development of studies addressing the topic of tuberculosis, in order to further enrich scientific knowledge and provide visibility to both healthcare professionals and users of Primary Health Care, considering the risks they experience.



The control of tuberculosis (TB) entails a series of actions encompassing clinical practices, service organization, interactions with other sectors within and outside of the healthcare system, and information and surveillance systems. Numerous national and international publications address these topics either in part or as a whole (Brazil, 2019).

In Brazil, the National Tuberculosis Control Program (PNCT) is responsible, among other actions, for establishing guidelines for disease control, which includes standardized treatment exclusively provided through the public health service. National recommendations are regularly updated and disseminated through technical notes from the PNCT and the publication "Manual of Recommendations of the National Tuberculosis Control Program," first published in 2011 (Brazil, 2019).

1 THE STIGMA ASSOCIATED WITH TUBERCULOSIS

The stigma of tuberculosis has deep historical roots that date back centuries. Since ancient times, tuberculosis has been known as a disease that causes fear and misunderstanding in society. Its origins as a mysterious and often fatal illness contributed to the formation of stereotypes and prejudices that persist to this day (Pôrto, 2007).

One of the main origins of tuberculosis stigma is linked to a lack of understanding about the transmission and causes of the disease (Pôrto, 2007). Before medical advancements, tuberculosis was often associated with supernatural factors, divine punishment, or even curses. These beliefs perpetuated fear and stigmatization of affected individuals, leading to marginalization and social exclusion.

Tuberculosis has historically been associated with unfavorable socioeconomic conditions (Valente *et al.*, 2019). In many societies, the disease was more prevalent among the poor and disadvantaged, creating an association between tuberculosis and poverty. This connection led to negative stereotypes about tuberculosis patients, such as being seen as dirty, lazy, or morally deficient.

Another origin of tuberculosis stigma is related to its portrayal in popular culture. Tuberculosis was romanticized in literary and artistic works, such as Giuseppe Verdi's opera "La Traviata" and Thomas Mann's novel "The Magic Mountain." Although these representations helped raise awareness about the disease, they also contributed to the perception that tuberculosis was a glamorous or romantic illness, obscuring the reality of patients' painful and devastating experiences (Souza *et al.*, 2010).

Throughout history, tuberculosis stigma has been reinforced by public health policies that sought to isolate and segregate them from society (Crispim *et al.*, 2016). In the 19th and early 20th centuries, sanatoriums were established to isolate tuberculosis patients and prevent the spread of the disease. Although these measures were taken with the intention of containing the spread of tuberculosis, they also contributed to the stigmatization of patients and their social exclusion.



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The stigma of tuberculosis has its roots in a combination of scientific misunderstanding, association with unfavorable socioeconomic conditions, representations in popular culture, and discriminatory public health policies (Touso *et al.*, 2014). These historical origins continue to influence the perception of tuberculosis in modern society, highlighting the ongoing need to combat stigma and promote a more compassionate understanding of the disease and those affected by it.

The stigma associated with tuberculosis can manifest in various ways, from social isolation to discrimination in the workplace or community. Misconceptions about disease transmission, association with unfavorable socioeconomic conditions, and fear of contagion contribute to the stigmatization of affected individuals. This stigmatization can lead to delays in diagnosis and treatment, as well as a negative impact on patients' quality of life and psychosocial well-being (Lucenti, 2023).

The stigma associated with tuberculosis is a complex issue that persists in many communities around the world (Touso *et al.*, 2014). Historically, tuberculosis has been associated with social stigmas, irrational fears, and discrimination. Although there have been significant advances in the treatment and understanding of the disease, stigma still affects the lives of millions of people living with tuberculosis.

Stigma arises from many places. In some cultures, tuberculosis is seen as a contagious disease that is only transmitted through close contact with infected individuals (Pôrto, 2007). This misconception can lead to social segregation, isolating those affected and denying them emotional and community support. Additionally, the association of tuberculosis with unfavorable socioeconomic conditions can exacerbate stigma, as poverty and lack of access to adequate healthcare are often perceived as contributing factors to the disease (Touso *et al.*, 2014).

The stigma of tuberculosis manifests in various ways and has significant impacts on the lives of patients, their families, and communities (Lucenti, 2023). This form of stigmatization not only affects the physical and emotional health of affected individuals but also creates significant barriers to accessing proper diagnosis and treatment. The key manifestations and impacts of tuberculosis stigma include social isolation, discrimination, negative stereotypes, delay in diagnosis and treatment, and impact on treatment adherence.

One of the most common manifestations of tuberculosis stigma is social isolation. Patients often face fear of contagion from friends, family, and colleagues, leading to their social exclusion and distancing from their social circles. This isolation can lead to feelings of loneliness, depression, and anxiety, negatively impacting patients' mental health (Muñoz; Miguel, 2020).

Tuberculosis patients often face discrimination in various aspects of their lives, including in the workplace, community, and even within their own families. They may be avoided, marginalized, or even dismissed from their jobs due to the stigma associated with the disease. This discrimination can have a devastating impact on patients' self-esteem and quality of life (Lucenti, 2023).



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Tuberculosis stigma is often associated with negative stereotypes, such as the belief that patients are dirty, lazy, or morally deficient. These stereotypes can lead to guilt and shame among patients, as well as perpetuate the cycle of stigmatization and discrimination (Muñoz; Miguel, 2020).

Tuberculosis stigma can also lead to delay in diagnosis and treatment of the disease. Patients may avoid seeking medical care for fear of being stigmatized or discriminated against, which can result in late diagnoses and disease progression. This treatment delay can increase the risk of complications and spread of tuberculosis to others (Touso *et al.*, 2014).

Tuberculosis stigma can also affect patients' adherence to treatment. They may encounter difficulties in following the prescribed medication regimen due to fear of medication side effects, stigma associated with visiting tuberculosis clinics, or lack of social support during treatment. This can result in inadequate or incomplete treatment, increasing the risk of drug resistance and disease relapse (Touso *et al.*, 2014).

Tuberculosis stigma has various manifestations that have a profound impact on patients' lives. In addition to affecting their physical and emotional health, stigma also creates barriers to accessing proper diagnosis and treatment, contributing to the persistence of the disease and its spread in the community (Souza *et al.*, 2015). Therefore, it is crucial to combat tuberculosis stigma and promote a more compassionate understanding of the disease and those affected by it.

To effectively combat stigma associated with tuberculosis, it is crucial to implement comprehensive strategies that address the multiple aspects of this issue (Brasil, 2023). A multifaceted approach may include public education and awareness, promotion of empathy and understanding, community engagement, universal access to healthcare, and psychosocial support.

Public education and awareness: Debunking misconceptions about the transmission and treatment of tuberculosis is essential. Awareness campaigns can provide accurate information about the disease, highlighting its treatable and curable nature, and thereby reducing the fear and ignorance that fuel stigma.

Promotion of empathy and understanding: It is essential to cultivate a culture of empathy and understanding towards people affected by tuberculosis. This involves encouraging supportive attitudes and solidarity instead of judgment and discrimination. Empathy can help reduce social isolation and strengthen emotional support for people with tuberculosis.

Community engagement: Engaging the community is crucial to combating stigma. This may include forming local support groups where people affected by tuberculosis and their families can connect, share experiences, and receive mutual support. Community engagement can also help challenge discriminatory attitudes and promote inclusion.

Universal access to healthcare: Ensuring that all people have equal access to quality healthcare is essential for reducing stigma associated with tuberculosis. This requires strengthening healthcare systems, expanding tuberculosis diagnosis and treatment services, and eliminating access barriers such as high costs and discrimination in care (Redondo, 2009).



Psychosocial Support: Providing adequate psychosocial support to individuals affected by tuberculosis and their families is essential to address the emotional and social challenges associated with the disease. This may include individual and group counseling services, family-based psychosocial interventions, and educational programs about the disease and its impact (Focosaúde, 2023).

By adopting an integrated approach that addresses stigma in all its forms, we can create more supportive and inclusive communities where individuals affected by tuberculosis feel supported, respected, and empowered to seek the necessary treatment for a healthy and fulfilling life (Focosaúde, 2023).

2 COMBATTING STIGMA: EMPATHY AND SUPPORT

It is crucial to promote empathy and support for individuals affected by tuberculosis. This involves educating society about the disease, debunking misconceptions, and fostering a culture of understanding and solidarity. Awareness programs should emphasize that tuberculosis is a treatable and curable disease, and that patients deserve respect and support throughout the process (MS, 2023).

Encouraging empathy and support for those affected by tuberculosis is essential to creating a more inclusive and supportive society (MS, 2023). Tuberculosis is a disease that, besides medical challenges, carries a significant emotional burden for patients and their families. In this context, it is fundamental to promote a culture of understanding, empathy, and mutual support.

Firstly, it's important to acknowledge that individuals affected by tuberculosis face a unique and challenging journey. The diagnosis of the disease can be frightening and often comes with social stigmas and concerns about the future. Additionally, the treatment can be long, demanding, and accompanied by adverse side effects. Amidst these challenges, it's crucial for these individuals to feel supported and understood (Muñoz; Miguel, 2020).

Empathy plays a fundamental role in this process. Empathy means putting oneself in another's shoes, trying to understand their feelings, fears, and concerns. By cultivating empathy towards individuals affected by tuberculosis, we can develop a deeper understanding of their experiences and needs. This enables us to offer more meaningful and effective support.

One of the most powerful ways to demonstrate empathy and support is by actively listening to patients' experiences. Allowing them to express their feelings, fears, and concerns openly and without judgment is crucial. This not only validates their experiences but can also help reduce social isolation and promote emotional well-being.

In addition to listening, it's important to offer practical and emotional support. This may include helping patients navigate the healthcare system, accompanying them to medical appointments, providing financial assistance when needed, and being present to offer comfort and encouragement during difficult times.



Another important way to encourage empathy and support is by educating the community about tuberculosis and challenging common stigmas and misconceptions. Awareness campaigns can help demystify the disease, highlight its treatable and curable nature, and reduce the fear and discrimination associated with it. By promoting a deeper understanding of tuberculosis, we can create a more welcoming and supportive environment for those living with the disease (Mendes, 2012).

Encouraging empathy and support for individuals affected by tuberculosis is essential for promoting well-being and inclusion. By cultivating a culture of understanding, solidarity, and mutual support, we can help alleviate the emotional burden of tuberculosis and create a more compassionate and supportive community for all.

3 PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL EFFECTS OF DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

The diagnosis and subsequent treatment of tuberculosis can trigger a range of psychological and social effects on patients. Fear of stigma, anxiety about treatment, and concerns about the impact on family and work life are common. Additionally, medication side effects can affect patients' mental health and quality of life (Focosaúde, 2023).

The diagnosis and treatment of tuberculosis not only affect patients' physical health but also have profound ramifications on the psychological and social aspects of their lives (Focosaúde, 2023). Tuberculosis is a disease that can trigger a range of emotional and social reactions, both in the patient and their family and surrounding community (OPAS, 2023).

One of the initial psychological effects of tuberculosis diagnosis is shock and anxiety. Receiving a diagnosis of a serious infectious disease can be overwhelming, leading to feelings of fear, uncertainty, and concern about the future (OPAS, 2023). The stigma associated with tuberculosis can also trigger feelings of shame and isolation, as patients fear social judgment and discrimination.

The treatment of tuberculosis can be equally challenging from a psychological standpoint. Many of the medications used in treatment have adverse side effects, ranging from nausea and vomiting to more serious issues such as liver damage. These side effects can significantly impact the patient's quality of life, causing physical and emotional discomfort (Maciel *et al.*, 2012).

Additionally, tuberculosis treatment often requires a long-term commitment, with the need to take medication daily for several weeks or months. Strict adherence to treatment is essential for therapeutic success, but it can be difficult for some patients, especially those facing barriers such as limited access to healthcare or lack of social support (Maciel *et al.*, 2012).

The psychological effects of tuberculosis are not limited to patients alone; their families and communities are also impacted. Family members may experience emotional stress and concern for the patient's well-being, in addition to facing practical challenges such as caregiving during treatment. In some communities, the stigma of tuberculosis can affect not only the patient but also their family, resulting in social isolation and discrimination (Gama *et al.*, 2029).

It is important to recognize and address the psychological and social effects of tuberculosis diagnosis and treatment holistically. This involves not only treating the disease itself but also providing



comprehensive emotional and psychosocial support for patients and their families. This may include individual and group counseling services, education programs about tuberculosis and its treatment, and interventions to reduce stigma and promote inclusion (Gama *et al.*, 2029).

By addressing the psychological and social challenges associated with tuberculosis proactively and compassionately, we can help reduce the emotional burden of the disease and promote well-being and resilience among those affected by it.

4 PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT STRATEGIES

To address the psychosocial challenges associated with tuberculosis, it is essential to implement appropriate support strategies. This may include individual and group counseling services, community support groups, family-based psychosocial interventions, and education programs for patients and their families. The aim is to provide a supportive environment that promotes treatment adherence, reduces stigma, and improves the emotional well-being of patients.

Psychosocial support strategies play a crucial role in addressing the emotional and social challenges faced by tuberculosis patients and their families. By providing holistic support that addresses not only the medical aspects of the disease but also the emotional and social needs of patients, these strategies can significantly improve the well-being and quality of life for all involved (Mendes, 2012).

One of the key strategies for psychosocial support is the provision of individual and group counseling services. Individual counseling offers patients the opportunity to explore their feelings, fears, and concerns in a safe and confidential environment. This can help patients develop healthy coping strategies, deal with stress and anxiety, and promote a positive attitude towards treatment and recovery (Cordeiro *et al.*, 2023).

Support groups also play an important role by providing a space for patients to share experiences, connect with others going through similar situations, and receive mutual support. Participating in a support group can help patients feel less isolated, more understood, and more empowered to face the challenges of tuberculosis (Cordeiro *et al.*, 2023).

In addition to individual and group counseling, family-based psychosocial interventions are also an essential part of psychosocial support strategies. Tuberculosis affects not only the patient but also their family and community. Therefore, it is important to involve family members in the treatment process, provide information about the disease and its impact, and offer practical and emotional support to help them cope with the challenges they face (Cordeiro *et al.*, 2023).

Education programs on tuberculosis and its treatment are also an important part of psychosocial support strategies. These programs can help patients and their families better understand the nature of the disease, the medications used in treatment, possible side effects, and the importance of treatment adherence. By providing clear and accurate information, these programs empower patients and their families to make informed decisions about their health and well-being (MS, 2023).



Psychosocial support strategies are essential to ensure that tuberculosis patients and their families receive the emotional and practical support they need to cope with the challenges of the disease. By providing individual and group counseling services, family-based psychosocial interventions, and education programs on tuberculosis, we can help promote well-being and resilience among those affected by this disease (Cordeiro *et al.*, 2023).

5 THE IMPORTANCE OF TREATMENT ADHERENCE AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Treatment adherence is crucial for the success of tuberculosis (TB) management. However, adherence can be challenging due to various factors, including stigma, medication side effects, and barriers to accessing healthcare services. In this context, emotional support plays a crucial role. Support from healthcare professionals, family, and the community can help patients face treatment challenges, promote adherence, and improve long-term health outcomes (MS, 2023).

Adherence to TB treatment and emotional support during the recovery process play crucial roles in treatment effectiveness and patients' quality of life (Focosaúde, 2023). TB is a disease that requires rigorous and long-term treatment, and consistent adherence to the medication regimen is essential for achieving cure and preventing disease spread. Additionally, emotional support during the recovery process is fundamental for helping patients cope with the emotional and psychological challenges associated with the disease.

Adherence to TB treatment is vital for several reasons. Firstly, TB treatment relies on antibiotics that need to be taken regularly for an extended period, usually six months to a year. Premature treatment discontinuation can lead to drug resistance, making the disease more challenging to treat and potentially endangering the patient's life. Therefore, it is crucial for patients to follow the prescribed medication regimen until the end of treatment, even if symptoms disappear (MS, 2023).

Furthermore, treatment adherence is essential for preventing the spread of TB to others. An individual with active TB can transmit the disease to others through respiratory droplets during coughing, sneezing, or talking. Therefore, ensuring that patients complete treatment is critical for interrupting the disease transmission chain and protecting public health (Souza *et al.*, 2015).

However, maintaining adherence to TB treatment can be challenging for many patients. Medication side effects, financial difficulties, barriers to accessing healthcare, and social stigma are just some of the obstacles patients may face when trying to follow the treatment regimen (MS, 2023). In this context, emotional support plays a crucial role.

Emotional support during the recovery process can help patients cope with the emotional and psychological challenges associated with TB. This may include providing individual and group counseling, family-based psychosocial interventions, education programs on the disease and its treatment, and establishing community support networks (Lucenti, 2023).

By offering emotional support, healthcare professionals, family members, and community members can help patients overcome stigma, overcome practical and financial difficulties associated



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with treatment, and maintain motivation to follow the prescribed medication regimen. Additionally, emotional support can help patients deal with feelings of isolation, anxiety, and depression that may arise during the recovery process (Cordeiro *et al.*, 2023).

Adherence to TB treatment and emotional support during the recovery process are essential for treatment success and patient well-being. By ensuring that patients receive the emotional and practical support they need, we can help them overcome the challenges of the disease and achieve complete and healthy recovery.

6 METHOD

A search was conducted in the SciELO (Scientific Electronic Library Online) and LILACS (Latin American and Caribbean Health Sciences Literature) databases. A literature review was conducted on social stigma and psychosocial support related to tuberculosis. Academic databases, scientific articles, and health organizations' reports were consulted to gain an understanding of the topic.

The research used the Health Sciences Descriptors (DeCS) as search strategy, (i) "Tuberculosis AND Social stigma"; (ii) "Tuberculosis AND Health impact"; (iii) "Tuberculosis AND Combat strategies"; (iv) "Tuberculosis AND Treatment adherence." The search yielded 430 publications in Spanish, English, and Portuguese languages, Open Access, from January 2007 to December 2023. Fifteen were selected.

The eligibility criteria used considered the aim of this article is to analyze the stigma associated with tuberculosis, investigating its origins, manifestations, and impacts on patients' lives. Furthermore, we intend to discuss the importance of promoting empathy and support as essential elements to combat stigma and improve the well-being of individuals affected by the disease.

7 CONCLUSION

Mitigating the stigma of tuberculosis and providing adequate psychosocial support are essential steps to improve the well-being and quality of life of patients. It is crucial to promote a culture of empathy, understanding, and solidarity towards tuberculosis, ensuring that patients have access to the necessary emotional support to face the challenges of diagnosis, treatment, and recovery. Only through a holistic, patient-centered approach can we truly combat stigma and promote health and well-being for all.

Mitigating the stigma of tuberculosis is a challenge that requires collective and ongoing efforts from all of society. It is imperative to recognize that stigma not only harms individuals affected by the disease but also hinders efforts for tuberculosis prevention, diagnosis, and treatment at the community and global levels.

However, by promoting empathy, understanding, and support for those affected by tuberculosis, we can create a more inclusive and supportive environment. Education, awareness, and community engagement are crucial for challenging common stigmas and misconceptions, while



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psychosocial support strategies such as counseling, support groups, and family interventions help promote emotional well-being and resilience for patients and their families.

By adopting an integrated, patient-centered approach to mitigate the stigma of tuberculosis, we can move towards a more compassionate society where all individuals, regardless of their health condition, are treated with dignity, respect, and solidarity. Together, we can overcome the stigma of tuberculosis and work towards a future where health and well-being are accessible to all.

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