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Respirators and mobile app made available to improve care and treatment of people with tuberculosis

International Council of Nurses TB Project donates respirators to African nursing associations and launches TB app in Russian and Spanish

Geneva, Switzerland; 24 March 2021 – The International Council of Nurses (ICN) Tuberculosis (TB) Project is helping to improve access to care for those suffering from tuberculosis. ICN is donating respirators and respirator fit-testing kits to four National Nursing Associations in Africa (the Swaziland Nursing Association, Lesotho Nurses Association, National Organisation of Nurses and Midwives of Malawi and the Zambia Union of Nurses Organization). The respirators will be made available to nurses working on the front lines with COVID-19 and TB patients.

To mark World TB Day today, ICN has also launched the Russian and Spanish versions of its mobile app, *Nursing Guide for Managing Side Effects to Drug-resistant TB Treatment*. The app is designed as a reference, so nurses can quickly identify symptoms that may indicate a side effect related to DR-TB treatment or antiretroviral medication; assess for severity as well as other potential contributors; and intervene appropriately to minimize patient discomfort, reduce side effect progression, and ultimately support successful treatment completion.

According to the World Health Organization “An estimated 1.4 million fewer people received care for tuberculosis (TB) in 2020 than in 2019, according to preliminary data compiled by the World Health Organization (WHO) from over 80 countries- a reduction of 21% from 2019.” (WHO 2021)

ICN President Annette Kennedy said:

“COVID-19 has exposed the effect of inequalities to care for those suffering from diseases such as tuberculosis. These respirators and testing kits will help to provide access to the nurses of the equipment needed, and our mobile app will enable nurses to better manage side effects of drug-resistant TB treatment.”

Dr Carrie Tudor, Director of ICN’s TB/MDR-TB project said:

“This smartphone app is a practical and handy resource for nurses in inpatient, clinic and community settings who are caring for patients with DR-TB. It helps them to identify potential side effects and provides suggestions for nursing assessments and interventions to minimize the side effects to treatment. Now this resource will be available in Russian and Spanish and accessible to more nurses and providers around the world.”

Based on a guide developed in 2018 by ICN and the Curry International Tuberculosis Center (CITC) in 2018 by nurses with experience in the clinical care and programmatic management of TB and drug-resistant tuberculosis (DR-TB) in both high- and low-resource settings, the app was released in June 2020 in English and has now been downloaded in 80 countries.

Nurses who tested the app praised its content and ease of use. A nurse from Mexico said:

"This guide has been very helpful when I have questions about a side effect caused by a TB drug. To be able to explain the side effects to the patient and to know to what extent the effect they present is normal. It has helped me better understand and evaluate patients' mental health, peripheral neuropathy, knowing how to distinguish what state they are in and inform the doctor when there is an issue with the patient. Without a doubt, this guide has helped us to better manage our patients, it is an excellent job aid."

A nurse from Russia said:

"The application is extremely informative for a nurse looking to identify and alleviate the side effects of anti-TB medications and ARVs in TB patients. It is a useful tool to help nurses monitor the patient's state and intervene quickly and effectively, which also raises the profile of a nurse in a multi-professional medical team caring for TB patients. The app comes especially handy for nurses in training, who can quickly learn how to manage side effects in TB patients and better understand the comprehensive nature of TB care. Huge thanks for such a professionally-made and working tool for everyday use."

The app is now available in English, Russian and Spanish on both [Google Play](#) and the [Apple App store](#). The print guide is available in English as well as Russian, Chinese, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Bahasa Indonesia and can be downloaded now from the ICN website [here](#).

The donation of the respirators and fit testing kits and the addition of the Russian and Spanish languages to the app is made possible by the generous support from a United Way Worldwide grant, and by the Lilly Foundation on behalf of the Lilly MDR-TB Partnership.

ICN's MDR-TB project aims to build global nursing capacity in the prevention, care and treatment of TB. This is achieved by training experienced nurses to cascade information to nursing colleagues and other health workers with the purpose of making improvements to patient care delivery. The development of this app was supported by the Stop TB Partnership's TB REACH initiative funded by the Government of Canada and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Russian and Spanish versions of the app was supported by a United Way Worldwide grant made possible by the generosity of the Lilly Foundation on behalf of the Lilly MDR-TB Partnership.

Reference: WHO (2021). "COVID-19 highlights urgent need to reboot global effort to end tuberculosis". News releases, 22 March 2021. Geneva.

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Note for Editors

The **International Council of Nurses** (ICN) is a federation of more than 130 national nurses' associations representing the millions of nurses worldwide. Operated by nurses and leading nursing internationally, ICN works to ensure quality care for all and sound health policies globally.

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