

STREAM: Promoting TB Prevention, Screening and Treatment Among South Africa's Taxi Drivers

Last month, the STREAM Stage 2 community advisory board (CAB) in Durban, South Africa carried out an awareness raising and screening session for tuberculosis (TB) at Emtshebheni Taxi Rank in Inanda, Durban. This forms part of the STREAM Clinical Trial researchers' and the affected communities' commitment to working together to improve awareness regarding TB.

The Community Outreach Officer responsible for this area, Nomsa Ngwane, explained the initiative to take TB screening to taxi ranks as part of the CAB's community outreach activities to access vulnerable groups. "We wanted to give the taxi drivers an opportunity to be screened. They work very long hours, starting early in the morning and finishing late at night and so they do not have time to visit the health clinics for TB and HIV screening."

Throughout the course of the day, the community was educated on transmission and symptoms of TB. They were also informed about research processes and the benefits of participating in a clinical trial, such as STREAM. The community outreach team distributed information on TB/MDR-TB and drivers were given stickers for their taxi windows to encourage drivers to keep at least one window open to reduce the risk of TB transmission in their taxi.

Neighbouring health facilities came to the taxi rank with their mobile clinics and provided TB, HIV/AIDS, blood pressure and diabetes screening, in addition to HIV/AIDS counselling. Rapid turnaround of the results was provided so that people attending the screening knew their TB status within a matter of hours. Those who tested positive for TB were referred to a nearby health facility for further tests and treatment.

STREAM CABs will continue to work with affected communities to raise awareness and ensure that complex information about TB and the trial is accessible to all.

The STREAM Trial is part of the TREAT TB project, a multi-year project funded by USAID, which seeks to contribute to new knowledge regarding shorter, more tolerable treatment regimens for multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) through clinical trials of priority research questions, targeted operational research benefitting global, regional, and country TB control efforts.