

March 21, 2011

College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences at Fiji National University has joined hands with Fiji Red Cross, Ministry of Health and Fiji Nursing Association to mark the occasion of World TB Day 2011.

The theme for this year's celebration is ***'On the move against TB – Transforming the fight against elimination'***.

The annual event on March 24 at the Suva Foreshore, (Civic Tower Waterfront), Victoria Parade marks the day in 1882 when Dr Robert Koch detected the cause of tuberculosis, the TB bacillus.

FNU will showcase some TB & HIV/ AIDS related materials that have been collected by School of Nursing.

Today, tuberculosis still claims approximately 1.7 million lives each year globally, posing a significant health risk to poor and malnourished people living in developing countries.

About 5,000 people die worldwide each and every day because of TB. We had 191 registered TB cases last year in Fiji from a vast geographical spread across the country and a 75 % treatment success rate in 2009.

It is important to seek treatment quickly when you realize that you have TB symptoms. TB symptoms include a cough that does not go away for more than two weeks, unexplained loss of weight and bad night sweats.

TB is not just a public health challenge. TB is also a social and development problem. This devastating disease strikes people during their most economically productive years.

TB takes an enormous personal toll and places a tremendous economic burden on families, communities and countries. Treating and curing TB at first attempt is important because it prevents the spread of TB, improves productivity by reducing absenteeism due to severe illness and averts TB death among workers thereby improving skills retention.

The main challenge facing TB treatment is that medication has to be taken for a long period of up to 6 - 8 months. Many people therefore fail to complete the course because they feel better during the first few months of treatment but are risk to develop Multi-Drug Resistant TB which is much more expensive to treat. If you have been diagnosed with TB, then please complete your full treatment course.

TB is preventable, and is also curable, when it is recognised and effectively treated. Let's stop TB, now!

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