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KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

SUCCESS STORY

USAID improves quality of TB laboratory services

USAID is training staff of TB laboratories in the Kyrgyz Republic to apply modern quality control methods



Photo USAID Quality Health Care Project

Staff from regional laboratories of the Kyrgyz Republic receives training supported by USAID Quality Health Care Project

“With the support of USAID Quality Health Care Project, we have been able to train all our staff and introduce the External Quality Assurance method countrywide. This will strengthen the quality of microscopy labs and improve detection of TB in the country.”

*- Gulmira Kalmambetova,
Director of National Reference
Laboratory, Kyrgyz Republic*

Tuberculosis is an airborne infectious disease that, if not treated, can be lethal. In many countries of the world, including the Kyrgyz Republic, tuberculosis poses a serious threat to public health. Smear microscopy is the main diagnostic method used to identify TB and to monitor the effectiveness of treatment. Regular quality control of this method is important to ensure that TB cases are not being missed or falsely diagnosed in laboratories. The External Quality Assurance (EQA) program is an internationally recognized standard that allows laboratories to regularly evaluate their performance and to improve the accuracy of their results. Prior to the USAID Quality Health Care Project, the improved EQA techniques were not employed widely in the Kyrgyz Republic.

Since 2013, USAID Quality Health Care Project has supported the National TB program to achieve countrywide EQA coverage by providing training for the staff of microscopy laboratories.

To date, the Project has trained staff of 120 of the existing 129 laboratories in the country and organized two workshops for the heads of regional labs to identify the challenges with implementing EQA. The Project also organized site visits to follow up on these challenges and to provide on-the-job training to help institutionalize the EQA expansion. Gulshan Mataeva, Head of Laboratory for the Bishkek TB Center and National EQA Coordinator says “As a result of USAID support, we are now able to assess quality of microscopy, to perform all the procedures in a systematic way, and to provide accurate results to doctors.”

Since 2013, countrywide coverage by the EQA system has grown from 35% to 93%. In addition, 79% of monitored laboratories achieved satisfactory EQA performance. Building on the positive initial results, the National Reference Laboratory, a state institution that supervises laboratories nationwide and ensures the quality of early TB diagnosis, is preparing decrees to institutionalize the EQA system. By the end of the project, the EQA will be implemented in all smear microscopy labs in the Kyrgyz Republic helping the country decrease the spread of TB and save lives.