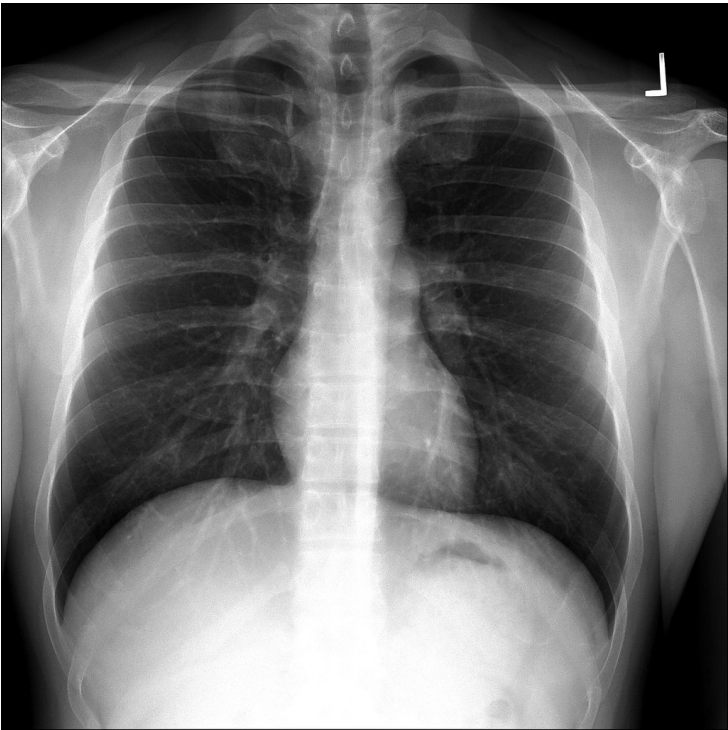


Free diagnosis and medicines for TB patients

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The RNTCP will continue to provide free diagnosis and medicines through its established network of centres to all TB patients.



All patients suffering from tuberculosis will get free diagnosis and medicines, irrespective of whether they produce an Aadhaar card, under the government-run Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme (RNTCP).

A notification by ministry of health and family welfare recently made Aadhaar card compulsory for TB patients and health providers.

The earlier notification had raised concerns amongst patients and civil society that treatment will get interrupted, and bear disastrous results, if the Aadhaar card is made compulsory for accessing diagnosis and medicines. India has 2.8 million cases of TB according to data from 2015, with many unreported cases.

The National Coalition of TB Survivors is concerned that implications (of this notification) may become a hurdle for patients in accessing urgently needed treatment.

Tuberculosis has become a disease of the urban slum, with homeless and migratory workers forming a bulk of the vulnerable population. Most of them do not have address proof, and in some cases even bank accounts.

The RNTCP will continue to provide free diagnosis and medicines through its established network of centres to all TB patients. Dr Sunil Khaparde, deputy director general (DDG), ministry of health and family welfare, and head central TB

division said that the government will soon roll out an incentive scheme to support patient nutrition, under direct benefit transfer scheme.