

New treatment methods lower TB infection rates

BY KEPHER OTIENO

Over the years, tuberculosis has been one of the major burdening diseases claiming thousands of Kenyans annually.

However, health workers have reported that an increase in prevention and treatment awareness is bringing down infection rates.

This is attributed better public education and partnerships between the government and private institutions dedicated to stopping the spread.

In Nyanza Province, the latest data shows cases of TB had drastically reduced from the initial 24,000 reported annually to 18,000. The figures are expected to further go down in coming years.

NATIONAL WORKFORCE

Since HIV/Aids attacks people in their prime, TB had followed suit. This is bad news that have affected the national workforce at a time the government has set ambitious development goals.

"Patients should tap this opportunity to secure early treat-

ment in Government hospitals as soon as they can," advised Gonidi.

According to the World Health Organisation's latest report, Kenya ranks thirteenth on the list of 22 high-burden tuberculosis countries in the world. It has the fifth highest burden in Africa.

DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The Direct Observation and Treatment (Dots) method was developed by WHO to help stop the spread especially in developing countries.

It aims at reducing infection, re-infection and deaths.

The organisation recommends early testing of those with TB symptoms, which include prolonged cough, chills and sweating at night.

The earlier a patient is treated, the higher the rate of success.

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Some of the health workers combating TB in parts of Nyanza. [PHOTOS: JAMES KEVI/STANDARD]