Can we diagnose TB better in nutrition centers?

Experience from Maiduguri, Nigeria

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The Union World Conference on Lung Health

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MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS

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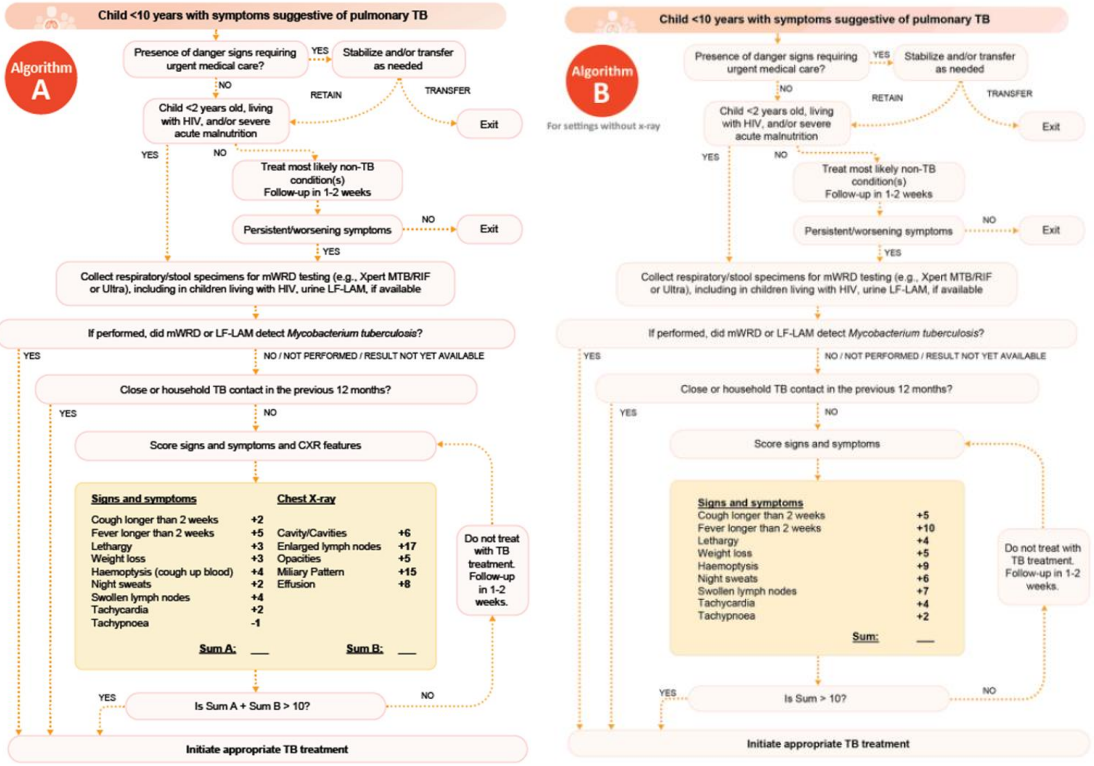
TACTIC Test Avoid Cure TB in Children

Background and Context: Maiduguri, Nigeria



WHO introduced treatment decision algorithms (TDAs) to enhance diagnosis and treatment of TB in children.

June 2023: TDAs implemented in **inpatient therapeutic feeding center** for severely malnourished children (SAM) supported by Medecins Sans Frontières (MSF), in Maiduguri, Nigeria

300 to >2500 admissions monthly

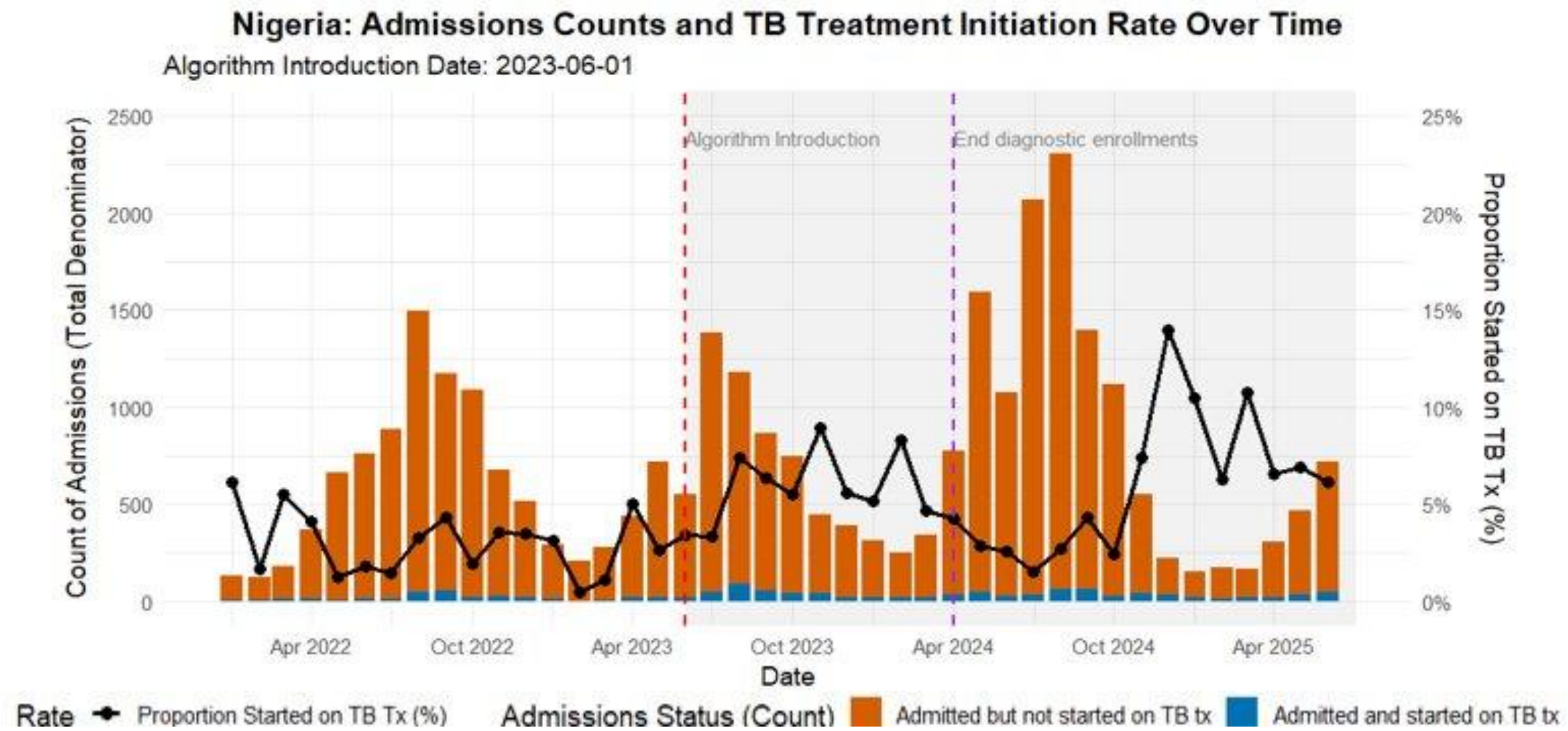
100 to >500 beds (low and peak season)

Diagnostic study on the TDAs concurrent with implementation

Implementing Treatment Decision Algorithms in Maiduguri

Key Challenges	Corresponding Solutions
HR and training demand, especially during peak season	**Frequent staff training** and **simplified tools to track outcomes**
Quality and **timing of chest x-ray** given no chest x-ray machine on-site.	**Algorithm B** (without x-ray) **used** when no x-ray available Identified **external/private X-ray facility** and **transported** patients via ambulance **Project now has x-ray on-site since April 2025**
Increased demand for TB medications = stock issues	Discussed with the **State MoH to increase the supply and enabled gap** shipment from the neighbouring state
Follow up of the algorithm use even after end of diagnostic study	A **focal person** was appointed to ensure mentoring and instant feedback to staff. **More supervisors** were subsequently appointed

Results and Impact



Interpretation and Limitations:

-- Fluctuations over time might be related to the seasonal variations in number of admissions and associated workload => Low admissions during non-peak malnutrition season increases rates observed

-Not possible to control for potential changes in context over time

Results and Impact

- A focal person was appointed to follow TDA usage and mentor clinicians.
- Clinicians report improved diagnostic capacity and confidence.
- MSF along with the National TB Program is supporting other centers in adopting the algorithm through training and technical assistance.

Conclusions

- Integrating the TDAs in a nutritional program has increased TB treatment initiation in malnourished children.
- Planning of resources needed enhances implementation success.
- Training and mentoring are key to a successful outcome.
- Follow up of the use of the algorithm using focal person(s) may improve sustainability.
- Adaptive strategies: frequent discussions and revisiting to respond to challenges is necessary.

Many thanks to our study participants, research team, and partners

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