TITLE: TUBERCULOSIS KNOWLEDGE LEVELS: A COMPARISON OF KINGSTON AND ST. ANDREW RESIDENTS AND PATIENTS DIAGNOSED WITH TUBERCULOSIS (TB)

[1] C. Lord, [1] D. Eldemire-Shearer, [1] T.J. Paul, [1] D.Holder-Nevins,

[2] L. Lord, [3] M. Tulloch-Reid, [2] M. Barton-Forbes,

[1]Department of Community Health & Psychiatry, UWI; [2] Department of Maternal & Child Health, UHWI , Jamaica. [3] National Chest Hospital, Jamaica

Objective: To determine knowledge, attitude and perceived risk with regards to the transmission, symptoms and treatment of Tuberculosis in the Jamaican population of Kingston and St. Andrews and persons diagnosed with Tuberculosis (TB).

Method: Telephone interviews were conducted with 228 adult residents systematically selected (1 in 25) from the Cable and Wireless 2004 telephone directory and a convenience sample of 35 persons with Tuberculosis attending the National Chest Hospital. The Health Belief Model which explains the relationship between peoples' perception and health behaviour was used to evaluate attitudes and perceived risk to TB.

Results: There were gender differences between the telephone interviewed group and persons with Tuberculosis (68% females for the telephone group and 61% males for persons with Tuberculosis) however, the mean ages were the same (45 ± 19 years). Only 13 % (30) of the participants achieved knowledge scores greater than the minimum satisfactory score. Education and having a diagnosis of TB

explained 16.5% of the variation in knowledge ($p<0.001$) with the latter being the most important predictor.65.9% (172) did not perceive themselves at risk for Tuberculosis.

Conclusion: General knowledge about Tuberculosis was unsatisfactory. Higher knowledge levels were associated with being better educated and being diagnosed with Tuberculosis. Public sensitization is needed regarding this re-emerging public health threat.

Key words Tuberculosis, knowledge, CWJ.