

World TB Day 24 March



World Health
Organization

Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean

The story of Ahmed



This is Ahmed. Ahmed is a teacher. He lives with his wife and two children and his mother in a village 20 miles from the nearest health facility. This is his story of how he became ill from tuberculosis (TB) and how he was cured with the help of his treatment supporter. Ahmed then became a treatment supporter himself so that he could help other people with TB in his village .

What are the symptoms of TB ?

- A cough that won't go away
- Fever

Ahmed feels unwell



For the last few weeks Ahmed has been feeling unwell. He is suffering from a cough that won't go away, fever, sweating at night – even when the weather is cold, loss of appetite, weight loss and tiredness.

Wife: Ahmed, I think you should go to the clinic for tests.

What are the symptoms of TB ?

- Sweating at night – even when the weather is cold
- Loss of appetite

At the clinic



The nurse at the clinic asks Ahmed to cough into a small pot. She takes three samples and sends them to the laboratory where they test them and tell Ahmed that he has TB.

Nurse: Anyone can get TB. You get it by breathing in the germs of an infected person. You must cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough to stop TB being spread to other people. Please bring your family to the clinic to be tested.

The nurse transfers Ahmed to the treatment unit in his village.

What are the symptoms of TB ?

- Weight loss
- Tiredness

Patients may display some or all of these symptoms.

Taking the medicine



Ahmed is told he must take four types of drugs together every day for two months and then two drugs every day for another four months. As he lives far from the health facility, a health worker, Abdulla, in his village becomes his treatment supporter.

Abdulla: We must arrange to meet every day, Ahmed, so that you can take your medicine and I will answer any questions you have.

How is TB spread?

When a person sick with TB coughs or sneezes, the TB germs are sprayed into the air.

Ahmed's family get tested



Abdulla asks Ahmed to bring his young daughter and son, who are five and seven, his wife and mother to be tested for TB. Luckily none of them have the disease. His daughter is given isoniazid every day for the next 6 months, a medicine to prevent her getting the disease. She is most at risk because she is so young.

Taking only some of the drugs or not completing the whole treatment will not cure TB

The importance of completing the treatment



Ahmed: I'm feeling so much better now. Can I stop taking the medicine?

Abdulla: No Ahmed. It is very important that you finish the whole course of your treatment. Otherwise the disease may become incurable as the bacteria become resistant to the drugs. You are also at risk of giving TB to your family and others in the community if you don't finish all the treatment.

It is dangerous not to follow the treatment correctly and take only some of the TB drugs because the disease may then become incurable.

Side effects of TB drugs



Ahmed tells Abdulla that he is suffering from nausea.

Abdulla: Don't worry Ahmed, this is a very normal side effect of the medicine you are taking. From now on bring some food or gruel to eat each time you take the drugs. This should stop you feeling sick.

DOTS

Is the name for a comprehensive strategy which primary health services around the world are using to detect and cure TB patients.

Ahmed is cured!



Abdulla reminds Ahmed that he must visit the health facility for a follow up sputum exam after 6 months. Ahmed's test is negative. He is cured! Thanks be to God! Ahmed and his family are very happy.

The role a TB treatment supporter is very important.

Ahmed becomes a treatment supporter



Ahmed: I am so pleased that I am cured. Thank you Abdulla for all the help and support you gave me during my treatment. I would also like to help other people with TB. Could I become a treatment supporter?

Abdulla: We would love to have your help in the fight against TB. You must go to the health facility to learn the responsibilities of being a treatment supporter.

The importance of TB treatment supporters

Their role is crucial in providing frontline support and encouragement to patients and ensuring that treatment is successful.

Ahmed's new role



Ahmed is now Azza's treatment supporter. Ahmed learns that he must:

- Watch Azza take the right TB drugs.
- Mark the TB treatment card after she has taken the drugs.
- Encourage her to continue coming for TB treatment.

Serving the community

The treatment supporter helps the community in getting rid of TB by looking out for people displaying the symptoms of TB.

Ahmed's new role



Ahmed learns he must also:

- Make sure there is always a supply of drugs for Azza. He picks up the drugs from the local health facility.
- Refer her to the health facility if there are any problems.
- Make sure Azza goes to the health facility when her follow up exams are due.

How will you get involved?

Celebrate World TB Day



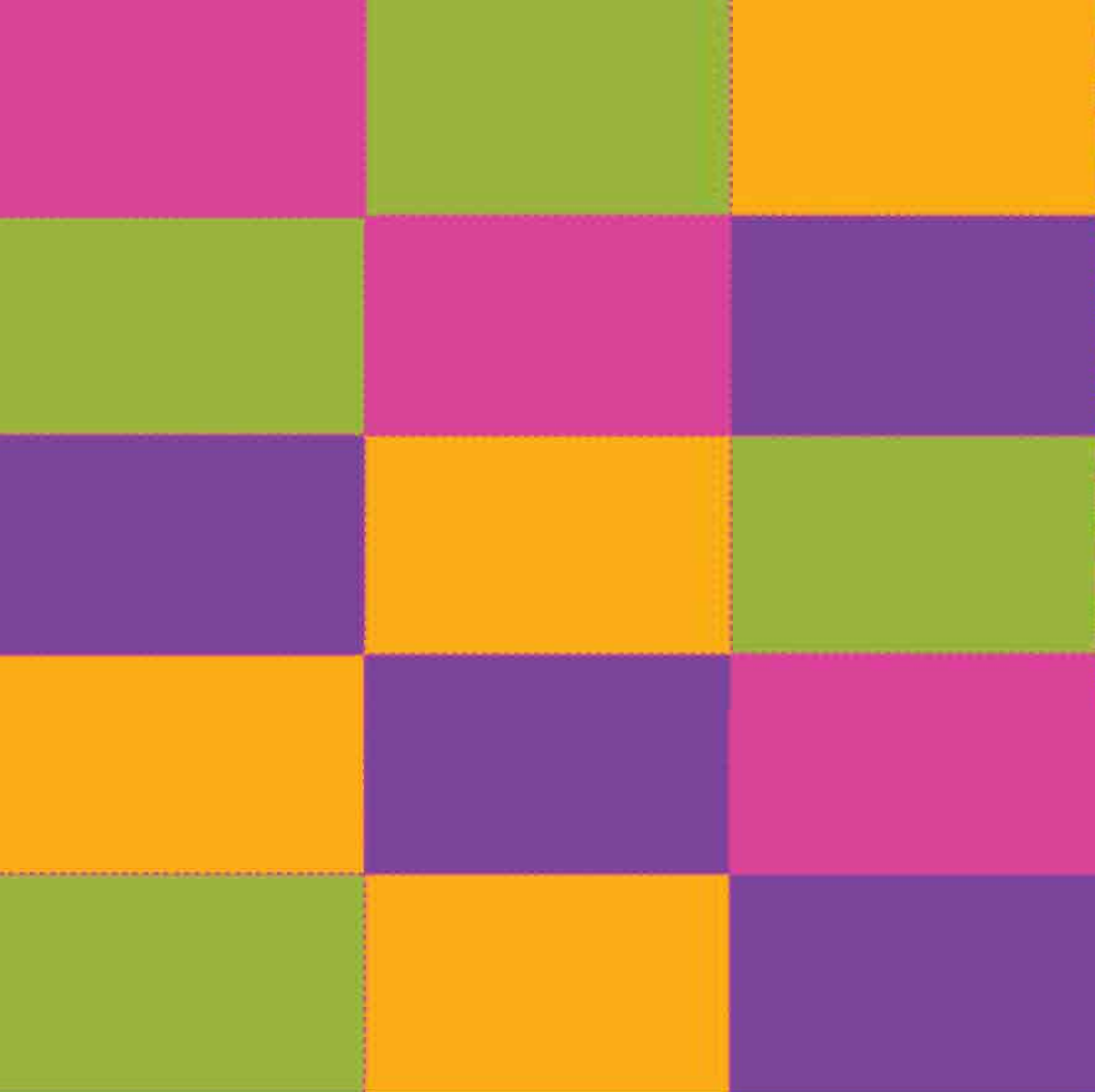
World TB Day is held on 24 March every year to raise awareness of the symptoms, diagnosis and treatment of TB, and the importance of effective TB control. Abdulla and the other treatment supporters from local villages hold a party where they give out information about TB to let people know about TB disease.

World TB Day commemorates the date in 1882 when Dr Robert Koch presented his discovery of the TB bacillus to a group of doctors in Berlin.

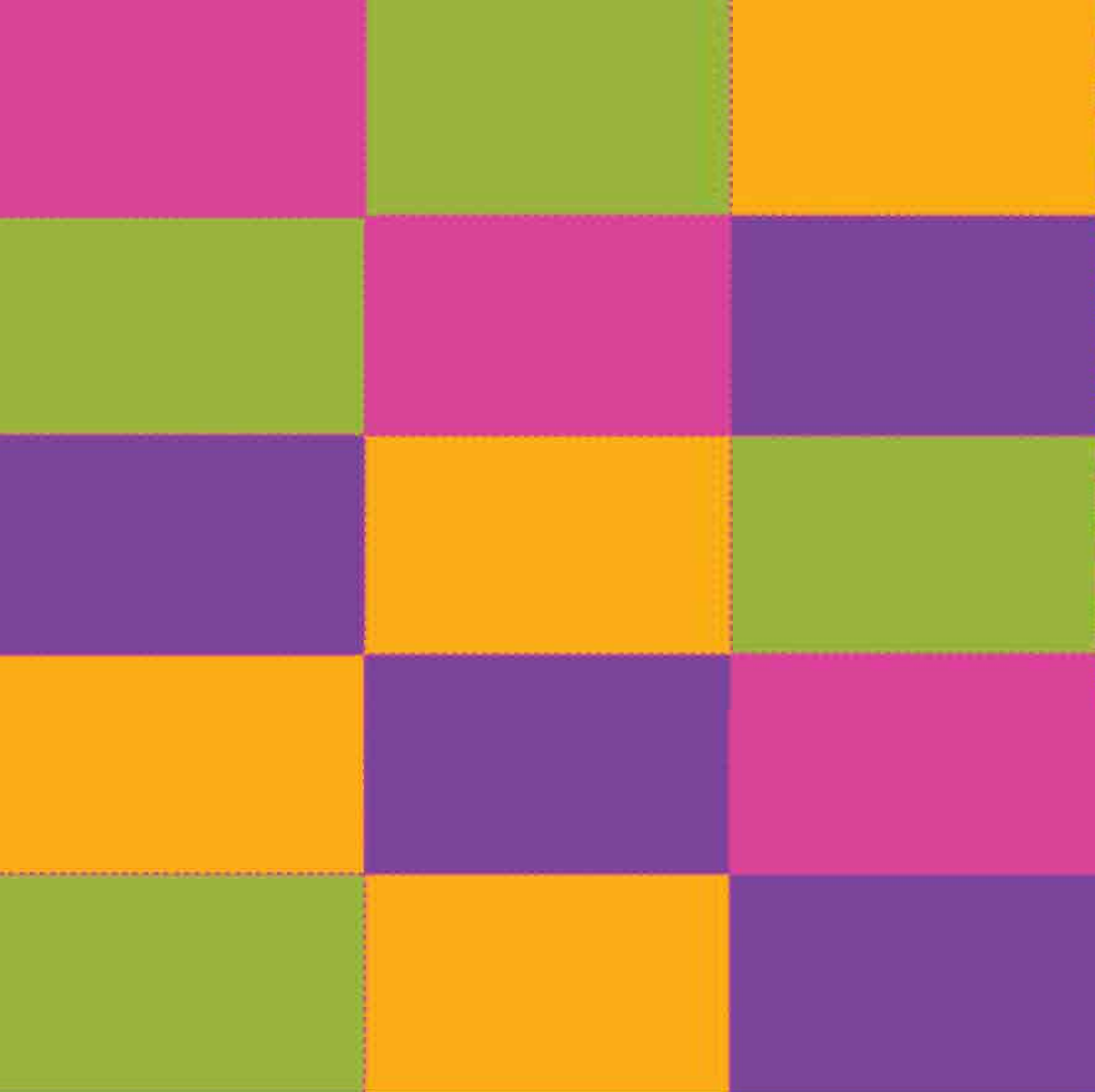
Test your memory about tuberculosis treatment by playing this memory card game.

- Cut cards with scissors.
- Place cards face down.
- Find the matching pairs.









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