

Xcode receives \$30,000 grant to enhance TB medication adherence

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The GC-TBC program is an initiative by IKP Knowledge Park (IKP), Hyderabad, in collaboration with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, to identify, fund, and nurture technology driven solutions that will assist TB control.

Commenting on Xcode's innovative solution, Mr Vikraman Venu Saranyan, VP, IKP Knowledge Park, said, "IKP is currently funding 15 innovations to help address the problem of TB Treatment adherence. Most solutions use mobile media platforms, but the solution from XCode is unique in that, it uses TB survivors to educate patients and instill the importance of following the treatment regimen."

He further said, "Their partnership with VHS and reach in the field makes them an ideal candidate. If they are successful in developing a prototype, IKP will provide an additional US \$100,000 to further refine and deploy their solution to address this unmet need."

The innovation highlights include: Mobile education system connecting TB patients with community peer educators and caregivers; Combining specialized information on nutrition and medication for TB patients; and providing timely reminders for patients to enhance medication adherence.

Xcode's innovation, '*health signals*', is a mobile education system which aims to improve TB medication adherence by connecting peer educators and caregivers from local communities with TB patients.

Available in multiple languages, Xcode will combine specialized information on nutrition and medication to be delivered simultaneously to patients and peer educators to enhance the treatment of the disease. The service will also enable caregivers to keep a track of the patient's medication adherence.

Xcode's mobile education system is implemented in association with Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme (RNTCP), the state-run tuberculosis control initiative of the Government of India.

The RNTCP incorporates the principles of directly observed treatment-shortcourse (DOTS), the global TB control strategy of the World Health Organization.

Talking about the grant, Mr Saleem Mohammed, CEO and co-founder, Xcode Life Sciences, said, "India has the highest number of TB victims, with an estimated incidence of 2.2 million cases out of the global incidence of 8.7 million cases (WHO, 2011). Through this novel initiative by IKP, USAID and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Xcode will endeavor to transform the lives of TB patients in India, and leverage our strength to create a sustainable way to improve TB medication adherence in the country."

As a part of the grant, Xcode will also get the opportunity to work with IKP, USAID and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for two years to help establish proof-of-concept, and leverage the collective experience of global mentors, resources, and their network.

Additionally, IKP, USAID and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation will help with access to networks and marketing channels to commercialize the innovation.