



## Tracing Patients Lost To Follow-up In An Urban Slum: Cooperation Between A Clinic And An NGO Network In Mumbai, India

Lisa Errol<sup>1</sup>, Petros Isaakidis<sup>1</sup>, Rony Zachariah<sup>2</sup>, Mohammed Ali<sup>3</sup>, Gurudas Pilankar<sup>1</sup>, Sanjana Maurya<sup>1</sup>, Claudia Geraets<sup>1</sup>, Joanna Ladomirska<sup>1</sup>, Sunil Patel<sup>4</sup>, Tony Reid<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Medical, Médecins Sans Frontières, India, <sup>2</sup>Operational Research Unit, Médecins Sans Frontières, Belgium, <sup>3</sup>Centre for International Health, Curtin University, Australia, <sup>4</sup>HIV Help, Udaan Trust, India

### ISSUES

Loss-to-follow-up (LTFU) among patients on antiretroviral treatment is a major programmatic challenge in both rich and resource-constrained settings.



### PROJECT

• **Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)** has been operating an HIV clinic in Khar(W), Mumbai since 2006, which provides care and treatment free of charge to patients referred by public and public-private ART Centers and by a network of community NGOs.

• A model of cooperation between the HIV-clinic and a non-government community network providing **LTFU-tracing** was tried in a Mumbai slum. Low LTFU rates were observed over 5-years.

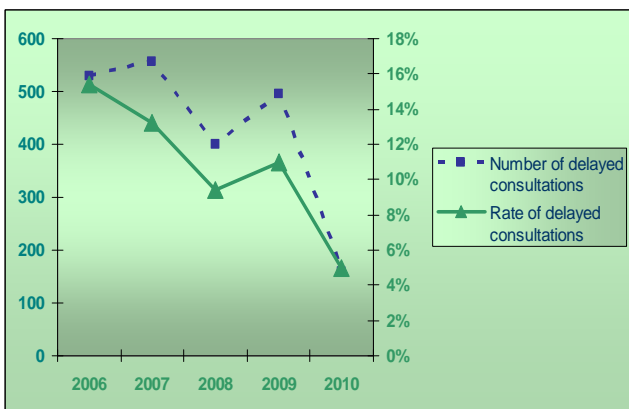
• A **mixed-method study** to examine potential reasons for these rates was performed.

• A **retrospective quantitative analysis** of patient data was undertaken and **22 semi-structured interviews** and **4 focus-groups** were thematically analyzed to explore patients' and providers' perceptions of tracing activities.

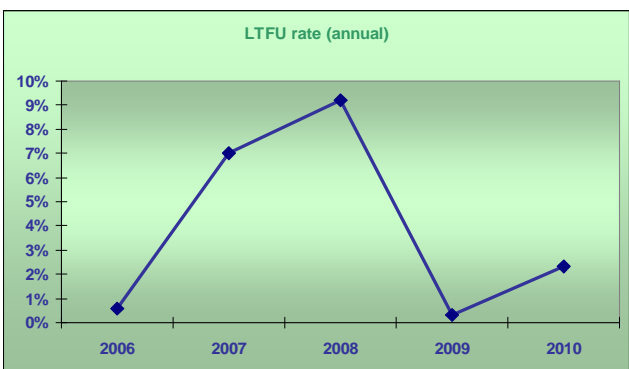


### RESULTS

- Overall **38** out of **819 (4.6%)** patients registered in the clinic were LTFU
- Most patients were lost during the first year of the project while the rates were **<2%** during the last 2 years.
- Few respondents reported experience of NGO tracing.
- **Phoning the day before an appointment** was perceived the most useful intervention to avoid missed appointments.
- **Fear of forced disclosure of HIV** arising from home visits was revealed.



**Figure 1a:** Delayed consultations over time  
**Figure 1b:** LTFU rate over time



### LESSONS LEARNED

- The low LTFU rate cannot be attributed to the network tracing activities.
- Phoning before appointments may result in less patients LTFU.
- Home visits should be a last resort method of patient tracing because of the risk HIV-status disclosure and experience of lasting discrimination from family and neighbors.