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**UZBEKISTAN**

## SUCCESS STORY

# Success of Counseling Skill

**USAID trains thousands of nurses to improve counseling of tuberculosis patients and treatment success**



*Nurse Aysa during a counseling session with her patient Ahmed at the Tashkent Tuberculosis Hospital. Photo: Project HOPE*

*“Many patients are thinking about stopping treatment as soon as they start feeling better. If there were more nurses like Aysa, many misperceptions about tuberculosis would disappear.”*

- Ahmed, former patient of the Tashkent Tuberculosis Hospital

USAID’s training has empowered Uzbek nurses to increase the cure rates of tuberculosis, a disease that has reached epidemic levels throughout Central Asia.

Research revealed that tuberculosis patients are often poorly informed about their disease and its treatment. “Within the first month of treatment, I began planning to drop treatment and go home,” says 38-year old electrician Ahmed, a patient at the Tashkent Tuberculosis Hospital.

To increase treatment adherence and success, USAID’s tuberculosis prevention and control project focused on the counseling skills of the medical staff. The project prepared a cadre of local trainers and set out to teach nurses throughout the country how to inform tuberculosis patients about their disease.

The change came in time for Ahmed. Just as he was about to drop treatment, Ahmed found out about informational sessions organized by his nurse. “I felt that I need to change my relationship with patients,” says nurse Aysa who had recently attended the USAID training on counseling skills. “This training helped me to understand how important communication skills are. I learned to listen, to understand, and to respect the feelings of my patients.”

The nurse began her sessions by asking what questions the patients had and what bothered them. At first, Ahmed was suspicious, but as the sessions became regular, trust grew. Ahmed learned about the length of tuberculosis treatment and the dangers of its early termination. He discussed this information with his wife and decided to complete the treatment. “I am happy that I am able to contribute to the treatment of my patients,” says nurse Aysa.

After two months of hospital treatment, Ahmed was released home to continue treatment at an outpatient facility. “Many patients are thinking about stopping their treatment as soon as they start feeling better,” says Ahmed. “If there were more nurses like Aysa, many misperceptions about tuberculosis would disappear.”