Personalized Treatment Adherence Support Strategies for Tuberculosis Patients in Kenya

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With Justin James Boutilier & Erez Yoeli In collaboration with *Keheala* 



Rotman Healthcare Roundtable - March 2020

## OM in Global Health — Broad Opportunity

#### The potential impact is significant

- Life-expectancy in sub-Saharan Africa is 57 years (79 in US)
- Child mortality is 8.3% (0.6% in US)
- HIV prevalence is 9% (0.3% in US)
- Among top-10 killers are Pneumonia, HIV/AIDS, Diarrhoea, TB, Malaria

## OR/OM is the relevant approach

- Funds, medicine, and technology are increasingly available the challenges are operational
- Programs initiated on small cost-effectivenes studies cost, feasibility, impact at scale?

#### The time is now

- Data is becoming available
- · Healthcare delivery programs are being scaled up and professionalized

#### The research is interesting

- Health delivery programs in sub-Saharan Africa are structurally different
- Programs are complex and underanalyzed
- · Research on extreme conditions can result in useful general insights



## Tuberculosis Worldwide





## Tuberculosis Treatment and Challenges

We have the treatment but treatment completion rates are low, partly for behavioral reasons.

## BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL

LONDON SATURDAY OCTOBER 30 1948

#### STREPTOMYCIN TREATMENT OF PULMONARY TUBERCULOSIS

#### A MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL INVESTIGATION

The following gives the short-term results of a controlled investigation into the effects of streptonycin on one type of pulmonary tubreulosis. The inquiry was planned and directed by the Streptonycin in Tuberculosis Trials Committee, composed of the following members: Dr. Geoffrey Marshall (chairman, Professor J. W. S. Blacklock, Professor C. Cameron, Professor D. B. Capon, Dr. R. Cruickshank, Professor J. H. Gaddum, Dr. F. R. G. Heat, Professor A. Bradford Hill, Dr. L. E. Houghton, Dr. J. Clifford Hoyle, Professor H. Raistrick, Dr. J. G. Scadding, Professor W. H. Tytler, Professor G. Wilson, and Dr. P. D'Arcy Hart (sccretary). The centres at which the work was carried out and the specialists in charge of patients and pathological work were as follows:



## Tuberculosis Treatment and Challenges

# We have the treatment but treatment completion rates are low, partly for behavioral reasons.





## Tuberculosis Treatment and Challenges

We have the treatment but treatment completion rates are low, partly for behavioral reasons.

- ... takes a long time
- ... significant side-effects
- ... requires frequent clinic visits
- ... has associated stigma









#### Our Solution

Disease Management Tools reduce the patient burden

Behavioral Interventions from the social sciences maximize adherence and motivation

Non-Stigmatizing Support

Data and Analytics focus limited resources

Accessible by mobile phone without download



## Keheala Platform

## Treatment Adherence Support

- Patient verification
- Reminders
- Sponsor outreach

## USSD Based

- Works on 'dumb phones'
- Only requires network connection

### Based on Behavioral Principles

- Increase observability
- Minimize plausible deniability
- Establish a norm
- Use pro-social motivation

#### Reminders and self-verification

It's time to verify!

#### Accountability and support

Hi Jane, it's Jill. I saw that you didn't verify today or yesterday. Is there anything I can do to help?



Yoeli et al. 2013, Andreoni et al. 2017, Dana & Cain 2008, Goldstein et al. 2008, Allcott 2011, Bicchieri 2016, etc

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#### Motivation

Congratulations! You made the heroes circle!

Congratulations! Together, we're kicking TB out of Kenya!



## Data Source: Keheala RCT

#### Design

- 1105 patients
  - 570 on platform
- 17 clinics
- Nairobi, Kenya
- Feb 2016 Dec 2016
- Data collected
  - Patient socio-demographic info
  - Health outcomes:
    - Bad: LTFU or D or F
    - Good: TC or C
  - Engagement outcomes: -Daily verification







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## Keheala RCT Outcomes



Figure 1. Unsuccessful Treatment Outcomes, According to Trial Group.



Yoeli et al. "Digital Health Support in Treatment for Tuberculosis." New England Journal of Medicine (2019)

### Research Objective:

#### "Develop an implementable policy for personalization of treatment adherence support"

#### Pre-Enrollment Research Question:

- 1. Who should be enrolled?
- Who benefits from treatment adherence support?

#### Post-Enrollment Research Questions:

- 1. Does outreach improve engagement?
- What is the population-level average effect of outreach?
- 2. Can we identify *at-risk* patients?
- Who is likely to cease verification?
- Who is likely to have a bad outcome?
- 3. Does outreach improve engagement among *at-risk* patients?
- What is the effect of outreach on at-risk patients?

#### Prediction

Causal inference

Prediction

## Causal Inference



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Prediction



### Prediction Accuracy

- Question: Can we predict outcomes?
- Data: Full population (Control: 535, Treatment: 570)
- Outcome: Unsuccessful treatment (LTFU, D, F) vs Successful treatment (C, TC)
- Features: Only demographics, no engagement data \*





### Counterfactuals

- Question: What is the individual impact of Keheala?
- Analysis: Individual outcome prediction with / without Keheala.



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#### Managerial Implications





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Causal inference Prediction



#### Identification strategy:

Reminder policy:
 Reality:

Each day: 1-3 reminders

• Outreach policy:

Day 1 of non-verification:

Sponsor message

Day 2 of non-verification:

Sponsor message



#### Identification strategy:

• Reminder policy:

Each day: 1-3 reminders

• Reality:

 $\sim$  30% of non-verifiers contacted each day.

• Outreach policy:

Day 1 of non-verification: Sponsor message

Day 2 of non-verification: Sponsor message

		Contacted by sponsor (%) Length of non-verification streak					
		1	2	3	4	5	
tion	1	31%	32%	31%	31%	30%	
rifica	2		28%	25%	27%	18%	
n-ve	3			12%	11%	13%	
ofnc	4				9%	7%	
Day	5					7%	
Observations		4,984	1,207	456	188	121	
Patie	nts	513	359	220	131	86	



#### Identification strategy:

• Reminder policy:

Each day: 1-3 reminders

• Reality:

 $\sim$  40% of non-verifiers not contacted at all.

Outreach policy:

Day 1 of non-verification: Sponsor message

Day 2 of non-verification: Sponsor message

		Total sponsor count instances (%)						
		1	Length of non-verification streak					
		1	2	3	4	5		
sages	0	69%	44%	40%	39%	39%		
mes	1	31%	53%	52%	46%	48%		
ы Б	2		3%	8%	14%	12%		
Ñ	3			0%	1%	1%		
	4				0%	0%		
	5					0%		
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#### Identification strategy:

• Reminder policy:

Each day: 1-3 reminders

• Reality:

 $\sim$  50% contacted on first two days.

• Outreach policy:

Day 1 of non-verification: Sponsor message

Day 2 of non-verification: Sponsor message

	First outreach within non-verification sequence (%)							
		Length of non-verification streak						
		1	2	3	4	5		
ation	1	31%	32%	31%	31%	30%		
erific	2		25%	22%	23%	16%		
v-nor	3			6%	4%	7%		
y of 1	4				3%	6%		
Da	5					2%		
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#### Identification strategy:

• Reminder policy:

Each day: 1-3 reminders

• Reality:

Capacity issue?

• Outreach policy:

Day 1 of non-verification: Sponsor message

Day 2 of non-verification: Sponsor message

Calendar day averages	6
	Mean
Number of active patients	260
Number of non-verifiers	97
Number of contacts made	24



Identification strategy:



- Conditional Logistic Regression to absorb patient FEs
- 63,907 patient-day observations (77%)
- 453 unique patients (76%)



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- 453 unique patients (76%)



	Next_Week_Verifier (1)	Next_Day_Verifier (2)
Sponsor_Contact	1.326***	1.362***
	(0.067)	(0.062)
Last_Week_Verifier	2.566***	2.509***
	(0.171)	(0.120)
Last_Day_Verifier	2.432***	2.287***
	(0.099)	(0.091)
Days_On_Platform	0.996***	1.000
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Weekdays	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$
Number of Reminders	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$
Observations	63,907	75,237
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.13	0.10

Exponentiated coefficients; Standard errors in parentheses



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## 2. Can we identify *at-risk* patients?

#### Framework



#### Features:

- Demographics
- Recent reminders
- Recent verification
- Recent messages
- Recent options accessed
- Time spent on platform
- Longest verification streak
- Longest non-verification streak

#### Outcomes:

- Next\_Week\_Verifier<sub>i,t</sub>
- Bad\_Outcome;



## 2. Can we identify *at-risk* patients?

Prediction outcome 1: Next\_Week\_Verifier<sub>i,t</sub>





## 2. Can we identify *at-risk* patients?

Prediction outcome 2: Bad\_Outcome<sub>i</sub>





#### Defining at-risk patients

- $At_Risk_{i,t} = 1$  if  $Pred[Next_Week_Verifier_{i,t} = 0]$  and  $Pred[Bad_Outcome_{i,t} = 1]$
- Not\_At\_Risk<sub>i,t</sub> = 1 if  $At_Risk_{i,t} = 0$

### Identification strategy revisited:





	Next_Week_Verifier (1)	Next_Week_Verifier (2)	Next_Day_Verifier (3)	Next_Day_Verifier (4)
Sponsor_Contact	1.285***		1.332***	
	(0.088)		(0.073)	
Sponsor_Contact				
* Not_At_Risk				
Sponsor_Contact				
* At_Risk				
Last_Week_Verifier	2.187***		2.224***	
	(0.158)		(0.120)	
Last_Day_Verifier	2.249***		2.125***	
	(0.109)		(0.100)	
Days_On_Platform	0.998		1.000	
	(0.002)		(0.001)	
Weekdays	$\checkmark$		$\checkmark$	
Number of Reminders	$\checkmark$		$\checkmark$	
Observations	33,867		47,748	
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.088		0.074	

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Sponsor_Contact		1.484**		1.313*
* At_Risk		(0.291)		(0.211)
Last_Week_Verifier	2.187***	2.180***	2.224***	2.225***
	(0.158)	(0.158)	(0.120)	(0.119)
Last_Day_Verifier	2.249***	2.249***	2.125***	2.125***
	(0.109)	(0.109)	(0.100)	(0.100)
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## Post-Enrollment Managerial Implications

#### Sponsor outreach summary statistics (per calendar day)

- 14.5 patients contacted each day
  - 12.1 classified as *at-risk*
  - 2.4 classified as not-at-risk
- 68.8 at-risk patients not contacted

#### Takeaway

- $\sim$  16% of sponsor outreach is "misplaced"
- $\bullet~\sim$  600 sponsor outreach instances should be re-prioritized



## Objective

### "Develop an implementable policy for personalization of treatment adherence support"

#### Pre-enrollment results

- Demographic data allows for *decent* (AUC=0.76) individual impact predictions
- Allows for initial assignment of treatment adherence support intensity

### Post-enrollment results

- Does personal outreach improve engagement? Yes, odds of next week verification increase by a factor of 1.3
- Can we identify *at-risk* patients?
  Yes, using engagement info (at *d* = 120) we predict outcomes with AUC=0.81
  Yes, using engagement info (at *d* = 120) we predict engagement with AUC=0.89
- Does personal outreach improve engagement of *at-risk* patients? Yes, *at-risk* patients are as responsive to sponsor outreach as other patients

- Incorporate prediction accuracy into pre-enrollment recommendation
- Generate counterfactuals for post-enrollment recommendation
- RCTs to evaluate *personalized Keheala* interventions



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## Demographic Features

	Control (n=535)	Intervention (n=570)	All (n=1105)	(p-value)
Female (%)	42.62	40.53	41.54	0.48
Age (yrs.)	31.87	30.63	31.23	0.09
Child (%)	9.533	7.895	8.688	0.33
English Language Preference (%)	60.56	68.25	64.52	0.01
Slum Dweller (%)	45.57	40.67	43.04	0.10
Number of Household Members	2.098	1.972	2.033	0.23
Education:				
None	18.46	13.01	15.64	0.01
Primary	33.52	30.05	31.73	0.22
Secondary	36.16	40.07	38.18	0.18
Advanced	11.86	16.87	14.45	0.02
Employment:				
Unemployed	25.61	22.89	24.20	0.29
Casual Day Worker	28.81	23.77	26.21	0.06
Self-Employed	23.16	26.58	24.93	0.19
Multiple Jobs	0.565	0.352	0.455	0.60
Formal Employment	17.70	21.13	19.47	0.15
Student	4.143	5.282	4.732	0.38
Travel Time to Clinic (minutes)	28.30	27.88	28.08	0.77
Smear-Positive (%)	55.85	61.01	58.50	0.10
Previously Treated (%)	65.85	68.49	67.21	0.35
HIV Coinfection (%)	32.82	28.49	30.59	0.12
Extrapulmonary (%)	23.22	23.33	23.28	0.97
Provided Nutrition Supplement (%)	92.18	90.46	91.28	0.32

