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Target Audiences' Responses to Television Public Service Announcements on Awareness of TB Testing and Treatment: Message-testing Findings from India

India has the highest burden of TB, with estimated incidence of 2.2 million out of a global incidence of 9 million. Drug resistant TB (MDR TB), which is rapidly rising in India, is known mostly to occur from the failure of patients to adhere to drug regimens. Therefore, early diagnosis and adherence to treatment regimens are important determinants of successful TB programs. While Public Service Announcements (PSA) that communicate the urgency of early diagnosis and treatment of TB may be effective, little research has been conducted to guide public education efforts. Given this background, Vital Strategies conducted message-testing of TB PSAs for their relevance, cultural appropriateness, and potential effectiveness in influencing knowledge, attitudes and behavior around TB testing and treatment adherence.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Four TB PSA concepts that addressed drug sensitive TB, MDR-TB, TB-Smoking link and TB-HIV, were developed into animatics and pre-tested through 20 focus group discussions in India. The message testing was conducted in three parts. Parts 1 and 2 focused on collecting quantitative information about each of the PSAs; and Part 3 assessed message take-out understanding and diagnostic issues, which involved short group discussions with participants.

RESULTS

All four PSAs scored consistently highly against 8 key indicators with a mean score of more than 90% including: *message was easy to understand, taught me something new, is believable*. All four concepts also scored more than 90% against 4 indicators related to social stigma and discrimination toward TB victims as well as motivation to adhere to timely TB testing and treatment: *this message makes me feel sympathetic to those with TB, makes me feel concerned about symptoms of TB, makes me more likely to visit doctor if I have TB symptoms; and, increases my confidence to take TB medications if I get sick*. Additional valuable insights on diagnostic, testing and treatment issues were provided from the qualitative discussions that helped in fine-tuning of the messages.

Following table shows the overall rating of the four PSAs against 12 statements:

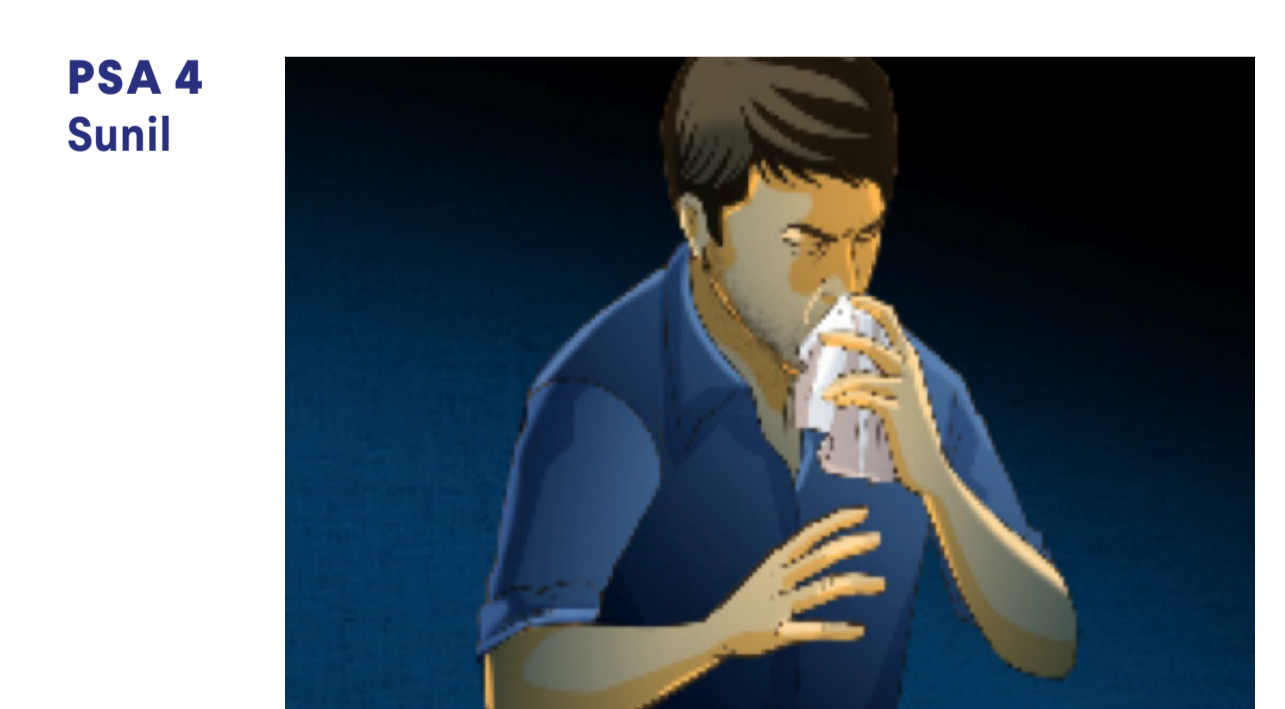
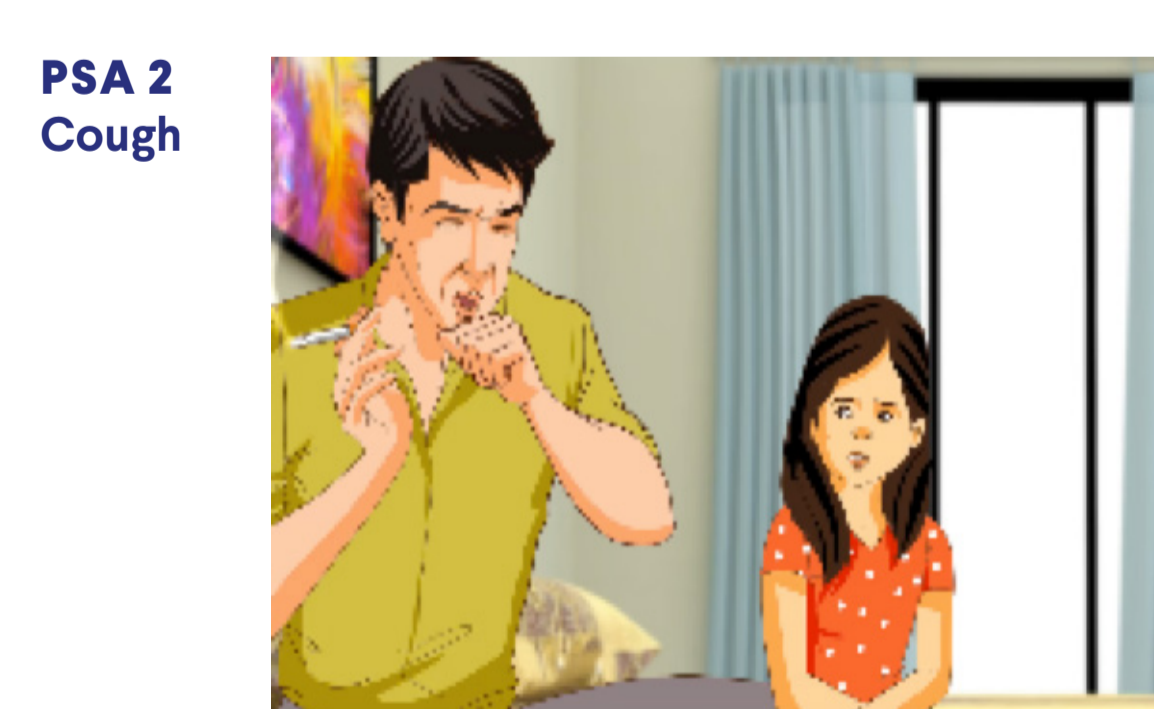
Percentage of respondents agreeing to statements for TB PSAs				
Statement	PSA 1: "Annu"	PSA 2: "Cough"	PSA 3: "Manoj"	PSA 4: "Sunil"
Easy to understand	97%	98%	97%	97%
Taught something new	91%	95%	94%	93%
Made me STOP and THINK	89%	87%	91%	91%
Is believable	94%	95%	95%	96%
Makes respondent feel uncomfortable	82%	86%	82%	85%
Relevant to respondent	82%	86%	85%	83%
Makes respondents feel sympathetic to those with TB	96%	93%	95%	95%
Makes respondents more likely to visit doctor if they have TB symptoms	95%	96%	95%	98%
Makes respondents increase their confidence to take TB medications if they get sick	94%	96%	95%	98%
An effective TB PSA	97%	96%	97%	95%
Would be likely to talk to someone else about this PSA	93%	95%	94%	94%
Cumulative Mean	92%	93%	93%	93%

Out of the four PSA concepts, two PSA concepts, "Cough" and "Manoj" came out as the most effective PSAs as given in the table below.

Respondents said "Cough" and "Manoj" made them feel most concerned about TB, sympathetic towards a person with TB, and aware that TB treatment is available and is free of cost.

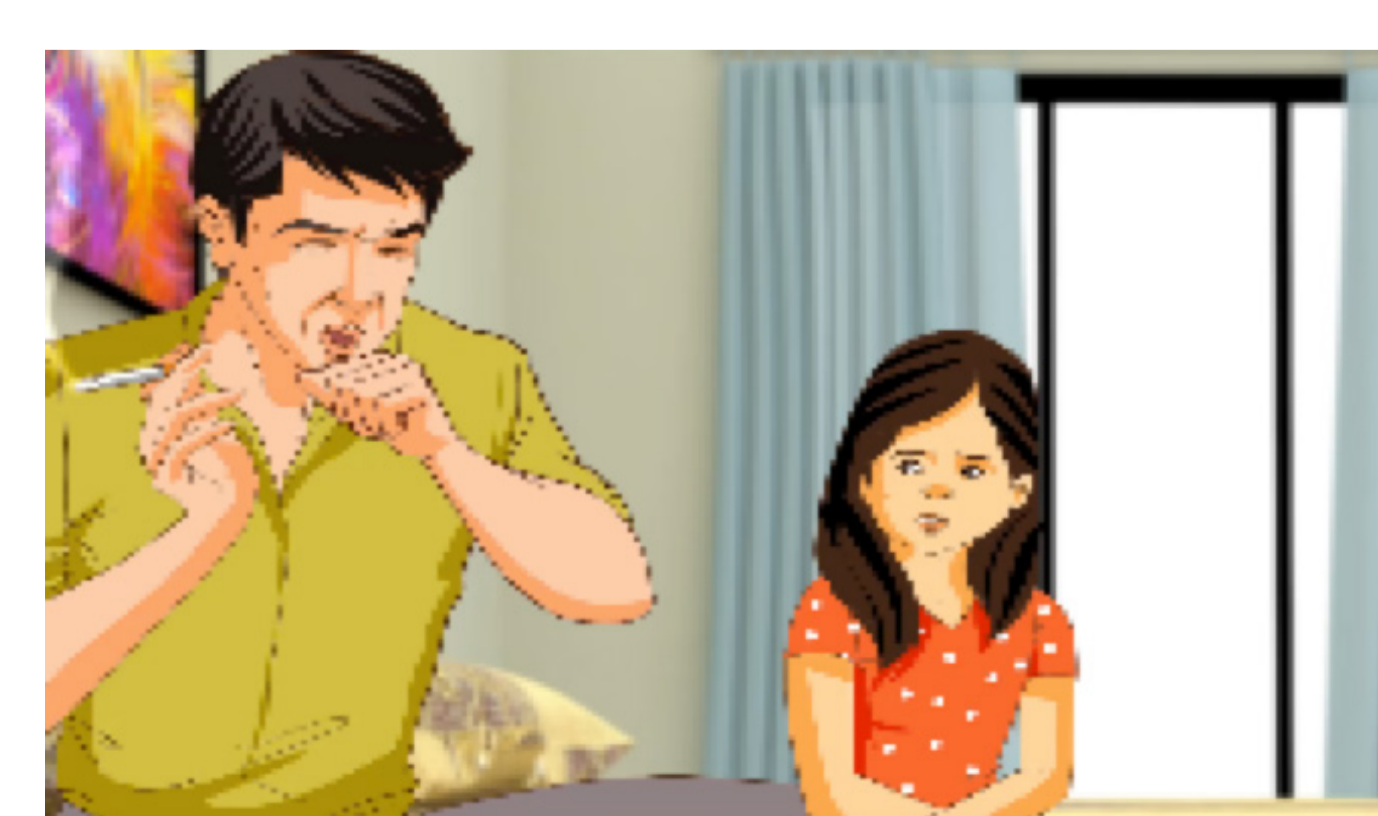
Proportionate comparison for most and least effecting tuberculosis PSA

PSAs	PSA that made them feel MOST concerned about TB	PSA that made them feel LEAST concerned about TB
Annu	14%	28%
Cough	35%	19%
Manoj	30%	26%
Sunil	21%	27%



CONCLUSIONS

This message testing found consistently high ratings across all concepts. It was found that the use of personal testimonials, animated imagery of the TB virus and emotional connotations of the serious health harms of TB increased the impact of the concepts. All the concepts were perceived as effective TB PSAs, emphasizing the urgency of the need to go for TB testing and adhere to treatment, as well as minimizing stigma around TB. Two PSAs: "Cough" and "Manoj" emerged as the most effective. Subsequently, "Cough" was developed into a PSA and launched in a national mass media campaign by MOHFW, Government of India in June 2017.



AUTHORS

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