

**EXPERIENCES OF FAMILY MEMBERS CARING FOR TUBERCULOSIS  
PATIENTS AT HOME AT VHEMBE DISTRICT IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

**by**

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**Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of**

**Magister Curations**

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**September 2011**

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## ABSTRACT

Tuberculosis (TB) is a potentially serious infectious disease which enters the body by inhalation and mostly affects the lungs. TB is ranked among the leading infectious diseases worldwide, and in South Africa (SA) it has become an epidemic, because of its high prevalence and there are multiple factors that were found to be attributing to its existence and spread. This was reiterated by the then Minister of Health during the World TB day on the 24<sup>th</sup> March 2009 that the community and family should be responsible for caring for the patients at home (Minister of Health speech, 2009).

The purpose of this study was to explore and describe experiences of family members caring for TB patients at home at Vhembe District of Limpopo Province. The objectives of this study were to explore and describe the experiences of family members caring for TB patients at home, identify and describe caring behaviour of family members when caring for TB patients at home, identify and describe challenges faced by family members while caring for TB patients at home.

The study was qualitative, explorative, descriptive, phenomenological and contextual in nature. A purposive sampling method was used. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews guided by four questions. Tech's eight steps of qualitative data analysis was used. Measures to ensure trustworthiness and ethical issues were observed. The results of the study revealed that family members are experiencing difficulties when caring for TB patients at home. These difficulties include providing food, attending to hygienic needs, lack of equipments, financial constraints and this was said to contribute to physical and psychological exhaustion. Recommendations in relation to caring for TB patients at home, nursing practice, policy makers and research were also made.