

Management of Routine HIV Testing through Voluntary Counseling and Testing Services among TB-positive Patients in Ukraine

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BACKGROUND. Objectives: Tuberculosis (TB) has been a major public health problem for centuries and is the leading cause of morbidity and mortality of patients with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)/acquired immune-deficiency syndrome (AIDS). Experts associated the worsening of epidemic situation with TB in the world with the rapid growth of HIV prevalence. TB has been ranked among the AIDS-indicator diseases (58.4%) and is the leading cause of mortality among people living with HIV/AIDS in Ukraine. Since 2009 it was significantly increased the percentage of HIV-infected persons with TB in Ukraine, especially in Kiev city (fig.1).

The purpose of the initial pre-test counseling for TB patients to inform HIV/AIDS and TB awareness of the importance of their knowledge of HIV status, which depends on the order of treatment assignment, and obtaining informed consent for the test for HIV.

The purpose of post-test counseling for TB patients is informing to HIV status, and, if necessary, psychological support and treatment plan development also as correction of patient's behavior during treatment.

METHODS. Ministry of Healthcare of Ukraine is introducing the services for voluntary counseling and testing for HIV (VCT) among risky groups (injecting drug users, homeless and others) and TB-positive patients among them. It was developed and approved strategy of increasing access to VCT services through the use of rapid HIV tests, but the question of training for the physicians, dealing with HIV/TB positive patients.

RESULTS. Implementation of VCT training of the physicians, provides sufficient information about the danger prognosis for delayed implementation of preventive and therapeutic measures for each patient in case of HIV/TB co-infection and, conversely, a positive result in case of timely implementation of appropriate appointments. It is necessary to motivate each patient regarding the advisability of testing for HIV for making informed and voluntary decisions about HIV testing, provide necessary advice of appropriate medical specialist psychologist after the test result. The main goal of VCT training is the development of patient adherence to TB treatment or HIV/TB co-infection, taking into account that TB refers to a curable disease, and the efficiency of its treatment depends on the course of HIV infection

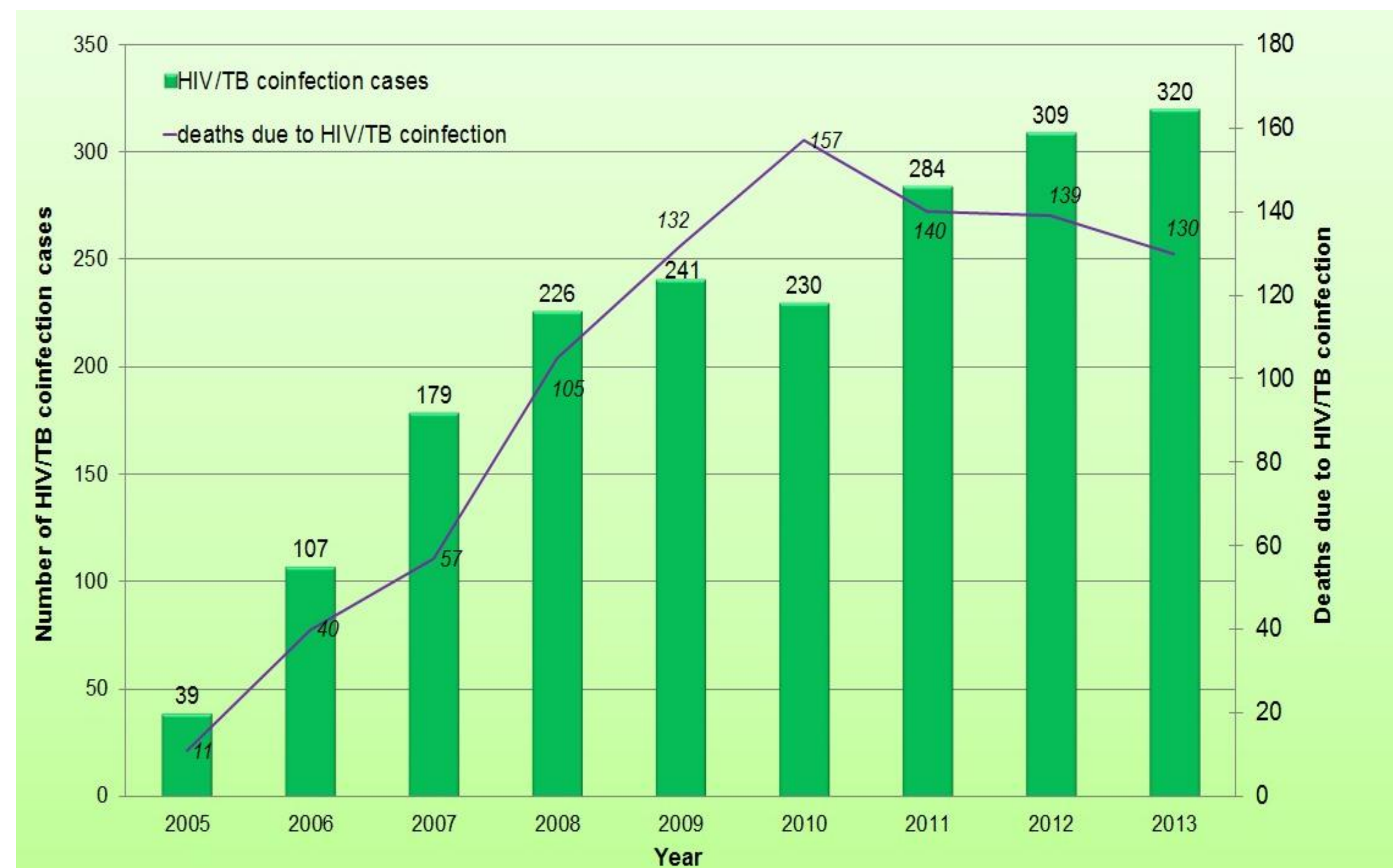


Fig. 1. HIV/TB coinfection cases and HIV/TB coinfection related deaths (Kiev, Ukraine)

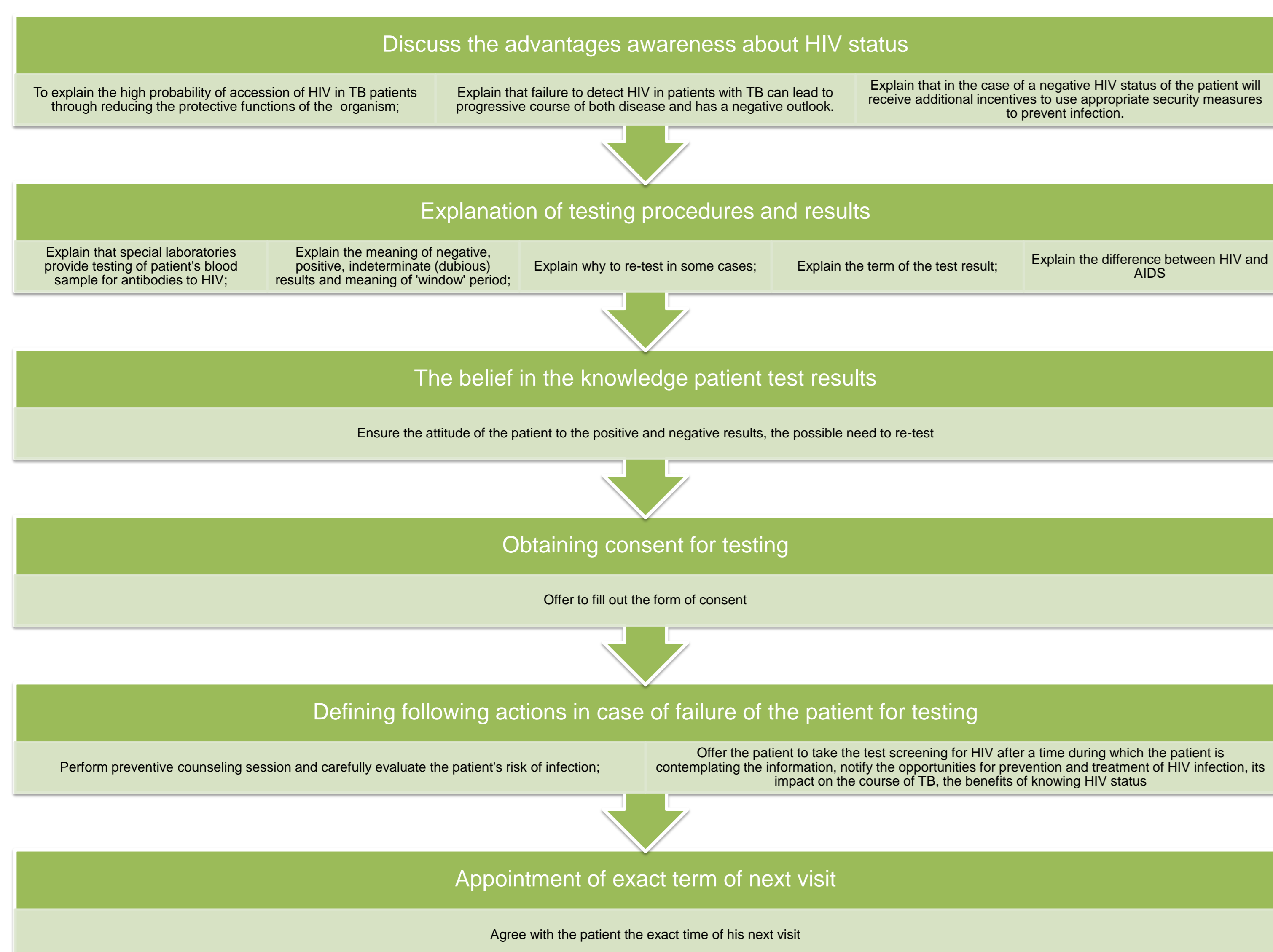


Fig. 2. Algorithm of pre-test counseling of TB patients

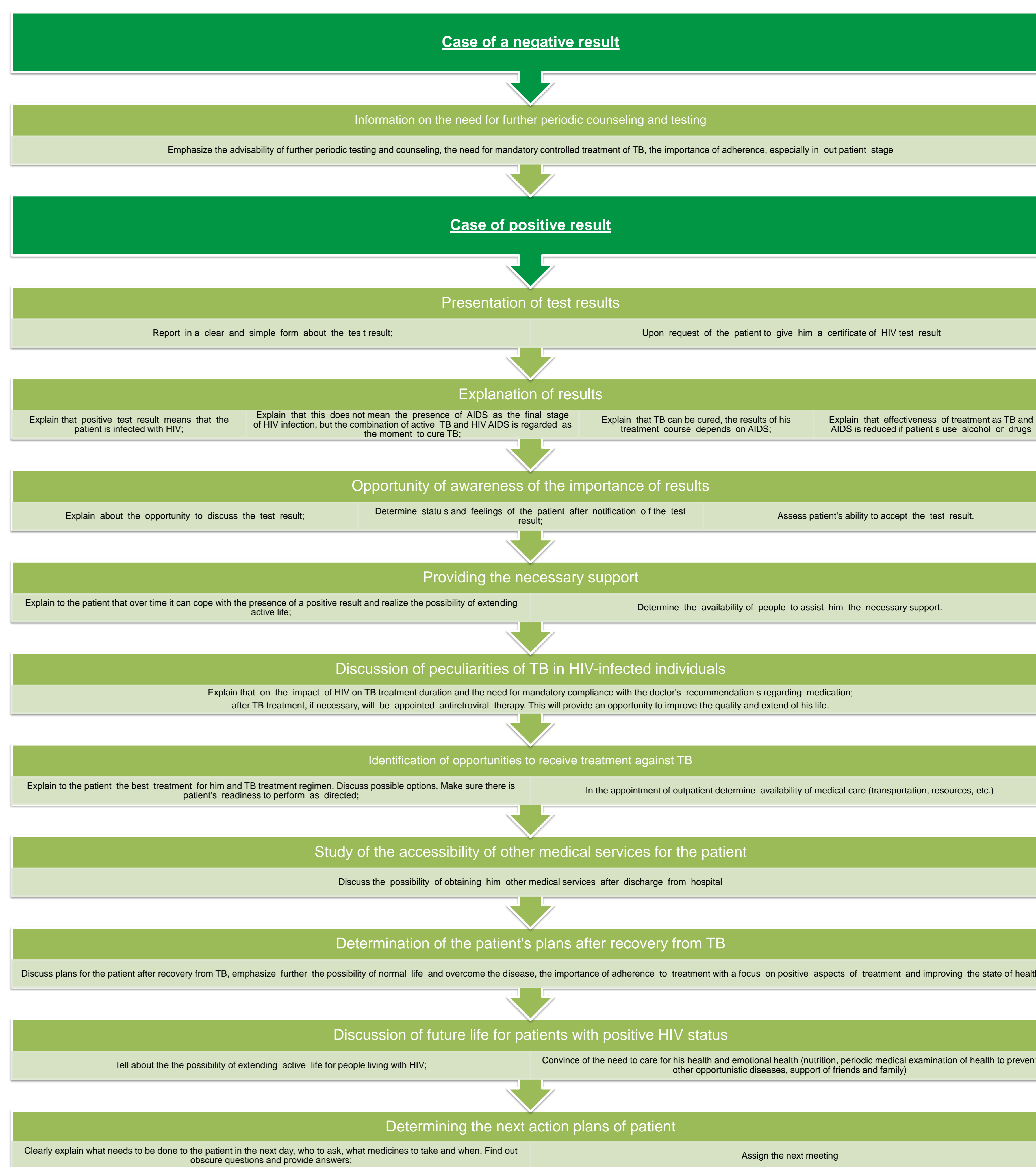


Fig. 3. Algorithm of post-test counseling of TB patients

Pre- and post-test counseling of TB patients (fig. 2-3) should be conducted in compliance with the general requirements of the regulations prescribed manner and subject to the following differences:

- ✓ social status of patients, including a large number of people released from punishment, have no permanent place of residence, family, not employed, have a low level of culture, education and awareness of HIV / AIDS and inclination to risk behavior;
- ✓ need long-term treatment of patients with TB and clinical supervision for them, allowing medical staff to contact them for a significant period of time;
- ✓ opportunities cure TB if early detection of HIV and timely treatment is started, and vice versa, severity of AIDS and adverse prognosis in case of acceding to TB and lack of proper treatment of one of them. This must be the primary factor in convincing the patient regarding the advisability of testing;
- ✓ prevalence of chronic TB and MDR/XDR forms of TB available that significantly worsens the prognosis of patients with HIV / AIDS, creates an additional burden on consultant causes a number of ethical and psychological problems.

CONCLUSIONS. Accessibility of VCT could help in further motivating TB-positive patients to undergo testing for HIV and the efficiency of practical VCT training of physicians, working with such patients, is likely to play crucial role as entry point for HIV care and support.