Sp20: Is there any need for strict bed rest during conservative therapy and what are the indications for ambulatory chemotherapy?

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Recommendation: All patients suitable for conservative chemotherapy can be recommended for ambulatory chemotherapy with a temporary bed rest or a spinal corset only till subsidence of pain. Pregnancy is not a contraindication for ambulatory chemotherapy.

Level of evidence: Moderate

Rationale: Ambulatory Care in tuberculosis is the standard treatment for TB whether drug-susceptible or drug-resistant with patients continuing their normal life as far as possible (WHO 2018). Hospitalization is required only in specific situations, even for spinal tuberculosis (one of the extra-pulmonary causes). Even with concomitant active pulmonary tuberculosis, as soon as chemotherapy starts, the bacterial load decreases substantially in about 14 days (WHO 2018).

Management of spinal tuberculosis is generally similar to management of soft tissue tuberculosis (Kumar et al.), except for the specific situations cited above. Many case series reported successful treatment of spinal tuberculosis in an ambulatory setting with close clinical follow-up. Indications for ambulatory treatment and recommendations for bed rest are exposed in the statement above.

References:

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