



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION: Topic 2

COMBATING TUBERCULOSIS AND ITS COMORBIDITIES

Background:

Tuberculosis has been a deadly and infectious disease that has been discovered more than 9000 years ago and is still present to this day. Throughout the 1600s-1800s, in Europe, it has caused 25% of all deaths and similarly in the United States. Tuberculosis is known as a disease that usually affects the lungs, but it can also affect other parts of the body, such as the brain, the kidneys, or the spine.¹ It usually brings people to experience extreme fatigue, weight loss, fever, night sweats and also death. Right now the world has prevented an extreme outbreak of this disease through the use of a vaccine given to infants which mainly prevents meningitis tuberculosis which can be lethal.² Specifically, in more developed countries the spread of this disease has been contained and under control, whereas in countries in development where 95% of cases are reported, 99% of those end up in death.

Current Situation:

As of today Tuberculosis is now present in almost every part of the world but most specifically in countries in the South-East Asian Region, with 43% of new cases, followed by the WHO African Region, with 25%. In addition in 2020 there were 1.9 million new cases of tuberculosis and it is now to be considered an epidemic and the WHO has decided to take action to prevent a further increase in the new cases. It is also to be known that those who suffer from HIV are 18 times more likely to contract this disease and, in the previously mentioned areas of the world, people are suffering due to a lack of education and material to prevent them from contracting such diseases. The WHO, in association with governments around the world, has already taken action and set up some clear goals: reach 40 million people for TB disease in the 5-year period 2018–2022; reach at least 30 million people with TB preventive treatment for a latent TB infection in the 5-year period 2018–2022; mobilize at least US\$ 13 billion annually for universal access to TB diagnosis, treatment and care by 2022; mobilize at least US\$ 2 billion annually for TB research.³ In addition, they have taken action directly with countries which are suffering by providing them help in reporting and analyzing the cases of Tuberculosis.

¹ "Fact Sheets | General | Tuberculosis: General Information | TB | CDC," [www.cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov/tb/publications/factsheets/general/tb.htm#:~:text=The%20general%20symp%20of%20TB), April 29, 2020, <https://www.cdc.gov/tb/publications/factsheets/general/tb.htm#:~:text=The%20general%20symp%20of%20TB>.

² "History | World TB Day | TB | CDC," [www.cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov/tb/worldtbdays/history.htm#:~:text=TB%20in%20humans%20can%20be), December 16, 2019, <https://www.cdc.gov/tb/worldtbdays/history.htm#:~:text=TB%20in%20humans%20can%20be>.

³ World Health Organization, "Tuberculosis," [who.int](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/tuberculosis) (World Health Organization: WHO, October 14, 2020), <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/tuberculosis>



Important bloc positions:

- **U.S stance:** They have reached more than 50 countries around the world to help with the epidemic and they are making efforts to effectively eliminate it by the end of 2030. They have also invested in research for cures.⁴
- **WHO/Europe's** policy is to end tuberculosis (TB) in all European Member States by 2020 by achieving universal access to high-quality and timely prevention, diagnosis and treatment of all forms of TB.⁵
- **The U.N** has taken action and is planning to invest and implement a new course of action as a whole.⁶
- The focus for both the U.S and the E.U has shifted from tuberculosis to COVID-19 resources and something to take in consideration is how the objectives of those countries has shifted.

Possible solutions:

- Invest in education as community engagement is essential
- Helping directly the organizations that are in the place where the crisis is occurring.
- Increase funding for better technologies
- Create an international organization that would deal with cross-country interactions.

Further reading:

- <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/media/en/publications/Publications/1203-Annual-TB-Report.pdf>
- <https://www.kff.org/global-health-policy/fact-sheet/the-u-s-government-and-global-tuberculosis-efforts/>
- <https://www.who.int/news/item/24-11-2021-what-s-new-in-the-tb-section-of-the-2021-who-model-lists-of-essential-medicines>
- <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-02892-x>

⁴ "The U.S. Government and Global Tuberculosis Efforts," The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, July 24, 2019, <https://www.kff.org/global-health-policy/fact-sheet/the-u-s-government-and-global-tuberculosis-efforts/>

⁵ "Policy," www.euro.who.int, n.d., <https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/communicable-diseases/tuberculosis/policy>.

⁶ "Tackling TB amidst a Global Crisis | United Nations Development Programme," UNDP, accessed November 30, 2021, <https://www.undp.org/blog/tackling-tb-amidst-global-crisis>.



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- World Health Organization. “Tuberculosis.” [who.int](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/tuberculosis). World Health Organization: WHO, October 14, 2020. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/tuberculosis>.