

WHO/Europe TB and M/XDR-TB quarterly newsletter – July 2014

FEATURES

[World Health Assembly approves post-2015 global tuberculosis \(TB\) strategy and targets](#)

21 May 2014

The World Health Assembly, convened annually by WHO at the UN Palais des Nations in Geneva, passed a resolution approving with full support the new post-2015 global TB strategy with its ambitious targets. The strategy aims to end the global TB epidemic, with targets to reduce TB deaths by 95% and to cut new cases by 90% between 2015 and 2035, and to ensure that no family is burdened with catastrophic expenses due to TB. It sets interim milestones for 2020, 2025 and 2030.

The resolution also calls on governments to adapt and implement the strategy with high-level commitment and financing. To this end, WHO/Europe will establish a multi-stakeholder steering group to prepare the Regional Tuberculosis Action Plan 2016-2020 and support its Member States in adapting the new global strategy to their settings.

NEWS

[Pilot project launched to strengthen ambulatory treatment for TB patients in Belarus](#)

Mogilev district, Belarus, 11 July 2014

The Ministry of Health of Belarus, in collaboration with WHO/Europe, has initiated a pilot project in the Mogilev district to follow up on the national action plan to improve ambulatory models for TB care. It provides additional incentives to primary care staff involved in TB care in remote rural areas.

[Identifying barriers to better TB outcomes in the Republic of Moldova](#)

23 June 2014

Participants of a policy dialogue organized by WHO in the Republic of Moldova on 28–29 May 2014 looked at areas in which the health system can be strengthened to boost the prevention and control of multidrug- and extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis (M/XDR-TB) in the short and long term.

[Structured Operational Research and Training Initiative \(SORT IT\) in Eastern Europe and Central Asia](#)

Astana, Kazakhstan, 23 June–4 July

In line with the Consolidated Action Plan to Prevent and Combat M/XDR-TB in the WHO European Region, 2011–2015, WHO/Europe together with TDR has been leading the Structured Operational Research and Training Initiative (SORT IT) in eastern Europe and central Asia in collaboration with MSF, Union, KNCV and CDC. The project aims to build the capacity of TB programmes to perform operational research in order to inform policy and practice and improve TB control. This training course comprises three workshops, inter-workshop mentorship and support by international experts, and an operational research project led by the participant.

[Monitoring MDR-TB diagnostics and treatment in Belarus](#)

21–25 June 2014

The European Regional Green Light Committee conducted a mission to Belarus on 21–25 April 2014 to monitor the programmatic management of MDR-TB.

[Training course on Strengthening TB control in prisons of M/XDR-TB high-burden countries](#)

19 June 2014

The newly-appointed WHO Collaborating Centre on Prevention and Control of TB in Prisons located in Azerbaijan is organizing a training course for policy-makers and health providers involved in the planning and implementation of TB services in penal institutions of eastern Europe and central Asia. The course will take place in Baku, Azerbaijan on 22–26 September 2014. Only 15 participants can be accepted. Please see application details and more information [here](#).

[Introduction of TB management tool in Armenia](#)

11–12 June 2014

In line with implementation of the Consolidated Action Plan to Prevent and Combat M/XDR-TB in the WHO European Region, 2011–2015 and further to the results-based management workshop in November 2013, WHO/Europe conducted a two-day country implementation workshop to facilitate efficient programme management in Yerevan, Armenia, from 11 to 12 June.

[Photo story – Prisons and health](#)

23 May 2014

Prisons are not healthy places. WHO/Europe works with countries and partners to improve the health of prisoners. Good prison health reduces reoffending, the social costs of imprisonment, and public health expenditure.

[TB in Tajikistan: achievements, challenges and opportunities](#)

22 May 2014

National and development partners, including the WHO Country Office and the Global Fund Portfolio Manager, met on 4 April 2014 in Tajikistan to discuss the sustainability of the national TB programme and overall health system strengthening within the area of TB/MDR-TB control and prevention. The meeting was a follow-up to a TB programme review conducted by WHO in July 2013.

[Review of the National TB Programme in Uzbekistan](#)

19–30 May 2014

A team of 15 international and national TB experts from 8 countries travelled to 4 selected regions of Uzbekistan. The experts looked at TB prevention, control and care in all technical areas, including policy changes, health financing, infection control, and TB/HIV co-infection.

[World TB Day 2014 celebrated in Poland](#)

07 May 2014

To raise awareness about TB, 2 events were organized in Poland on the occasion of World TB Day 2014. The National Research Institute for Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases under the auspices of the Chief Sanitary Inspectorate, organized a press conference on 19 March to address the current status of TB in the country. The Polish Society of Lung Disease organized a conference on 21 March, highlighting that TB is both a social and a health problem.

[Combating tuberculosis in Slovakia is a battle not yet won](#)

09 April 2014

After several years of decreasing incidence, 2013 saw a rise in the number of TB cases in Slovakia. Slovak experts from the National Institute of TB, Respiratory Diseases and Chest Surgery pointed to several factors influencing this increase during a World TB Day press conference on 24 March 2014.

[Belarus initiates dialogue with the Global Fund for continued support in controlling MDR-TB](#)

07 April 2014

A workshop on the development of a national strategic plan for TB control in 2015–2020 took place on 2–3 April 2014 in Minsk, Belarus. The meeting was hosted by the Ministry of Health and the national TB programme in collaboration with the Global Fund, WHO/Europe, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), representatives of the Belarusian Red Cross and a TB patient organization.

[Faster diagnosis key to finding drug-resistant TB in the Republic of Moldova](#)

24 March 2014

Cristina had been sick with pneumonia-like symptoms for three months. She kept putting off going to the doctor, hoping that she could cure her illness with herbal treatments at home. Even though her health insurance covers the cost of most health services, Cristina, who is in her seventies, was worried about the additional costs of going to hospital. Eventually when she was “nearly dead”, she says, she went to the doctor, who diagnosed her with TB and transferred her to hospital in Chisinau. She then spent 6 weeks in the TB ward before she was eventually diagnosed with MDR-TB.

“Rapid diagnosis is extremely important in combating MDR-TB”, says Dr Pierpaolo de Colombani from the review team of the national TB programme organized by WHO/Europe. For too many people, however, diagnosis comes late or not at all. WHO estimates that just one in four new MDR-TB cases was diagnosed in 2012.

COUNTRY IN FOCUS: REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

The Republic of Moldova is among the WHO European Region’s 18 high-priority countries for TB control and among the world’s 27 multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) high burden countries. Despite more recent indications of fewer TB deaths and patients lost to follow-up, still almost one third of newly diagnosed TB patients and two thirds of those returning for treatment have MDR-TB in the Republic of Moldova. There is a significant discrepancy in TB indicators across the country, in particular in the Transnistria region and in prison facilities there.

WHO conducted a comprehensive TB programme review in 2013, outlining the progress achieved as well as a number of key challenges such as:

- late access to diagnosis, poor infection control and excessive use of hospitals for TB care;
- uneven incentives/enablers for TB patients and/or providers; and
- governance issues- flagged during the programme review.

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria (the Global Fund) ranks the Republic of Moldova second among 110 countries by level of funds provided per capita. Currently, there is growing evidence of a higher government commitment to improve TB control in the Republic of Moldova, as indicated by a 50% increase in the domestic funding earmarked for the national TB programme in the mid-term expenditure framework 2015–2017.

In 2013, domestic funds accounted for almost two thirds of national TB programme costs, international funds another 12%, and uncovered needs tally up to almost one quarter (Republic of Moldova's TB country profile). Except for the Transnistria region, prisons and pediatric doses (which are covered by either the Global Fund or Global Drug Facility (GDF grant), all traditional diagnoses, first-line drugs and a growing number of patients enrolled in second-line treatment, have been funded by the government since 2013.

Following the TB programme review, WHO developed a strategic action plan for TB case holding and outpatient care in 2013, (updated in 2014), which was meant to tackle most of the problems related to treatment enrolment, poor infection control, treatment retention and directly-observed-treatment. This was the overall goal of a recent policy dialogue meeting organized in late May 2014 in Chisinau, aimed at removing health system barriers for better TB outcomes. Moreover, the country is making use of rapid diagnostic tools, including Xpert MTB/RIF techniques, and has been piloting a number of community-based support models and civil society engagement.

The Republic of Moldova is eligible for further funding under the Global Fund new funding model, and WHO has been providing support to start drafting a new national TB programme 2016–2020. This included a regional meeting for national strategic plans development in Divonne-les-Bains, France, in February 2014 and a Tuberculosis Technical Assistance Mechanism (TBTEAM) meeting in Copenhagen, Denmark, in June 2014. Together with other stakeholders, WHO has been participating in country dialogue and the development of the concept note that the country is planning to file with the Global Fund for a TB grant. WHO stands ready to provide further technical support during the country dialogue at all levels and help develop the new national TB programme for TB control, including through health system strengthening.

For more information:

[Republic of Moldova TB country work summary](#)

RECENTLY PUBLISHED

[New WHO publication: TB surveillance standards guide](#)

Developed as part of the work of the Global Task Force on TB Impact Measurement, WHO recently published the "Standards and benchmarks for TB surveillance and vital registration systems. Checklist and user guide".

[Review of the TB Programme in Kosovo \(in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244\)](#)

The notification rate of TB cases in Kosovo (in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244) is among the highest in south-east Europe. WHO/Europe was asked to organize a review of the TB Programme, which took place from 22 to 26 April 2013. The reviewers provided a number of recommendations to improve the programme and to ensure its long-term sustainability. The report from this review has just been published.

[TB prevention and control in prisons: do we know enough?](#)

An editorial on the role of the penitentiary setting in TB control, and how the challenges that hinder TB control in this setting are not well understood - largely due to limited surveillance and research.

UPCOMING EVENTS

[19th International Training Course on TB Control](#)

21–28 August 2014, Tartu, Estonia

[National workshop on introduction of new TB drug in Kazakhstan](#)

16–18 September 2014, Copenhagen, Denmark

[3rd Meeting of the Regional Collaborating Committee on TB Control and Care \(RCC-TB\)](#)

24 November 2014, Copenhagen, Denmark

[9th Meeting of European Technical Advisory Group on TB Control \(TAG-TB\)](#)

25–26 November 2014, Copenhagen, Denmark

[Subregional training on maintenance and certification of biosafety cabinets](#)

27–28 November 2014, Copenhagen, Denmark

[Subregional workshop on evaluating the diagnostic TB and MDR/TB algorithm](#)

27–28 November 2014, Copenhagen, Denmark

RECENT EVENTS

[Review of the National TB Programme in Kyrgyzstan](#)

30 June–5 July 2014

[TBTEAM European Regional meeting](#)

2–3 June 2014, Copenhagen, Denmark

[Review of the National TB Programme in Bulgaria](#)

2–9 June 2014

[World TB Day 2014: boost efforts to eliminate TB by 2050](#)

24 March 2014

QUICK FACT

Due to overcrowding and poor nutrition, TB rates in prisons are up to 84 times higher than in the general population. The situation is worsened by the emergence and spread of drug-resistant TB, particularly M/XDR-TB.

Source: [Prisons and Health 2014](#)

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