

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

FEATURES

[World TB Day 2014](#)

Member States, partners and WHO country offices throughout the Region have been organizing different activities to mark World TB Day. To this end, WHO Regional Office for Europe organized a high level event on 24 March 2014.

During the event, a panel, including Ms Zsuzsanna Jakab, WHO Regional Director for Europe, Marc Sprenger, Director of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), Michel Kazatchkine, United Nations Secretary General Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in eastern Europe and central Asia, representatives of the European Commission and the Danish Health and Medicines Authority, civil society and ex multidrug-resistant (MDR-TB) patients presented the TB and MDR-TB situation in the WHO European Region and discussed the progress, challenges and next steps for TB prevention, control and care. Ambassadors and representatives of diplomatic missions of Member States in Denmark, directors and high level representatives of partner organizations also participated in the event. A photo book with patients' stories from Uzbekistan emphasizing the importance of patient-centred care and the WHO/ECDC report [Tuberculosis surveillance and monitoring in Europe 2014](#) were also officially launched.

A joint WHO/ECDC twitter chat on TB in the European Region was held on World TB day, which stimulated lively discussion throughout the day.

Press release: [Tuberculosis cases down by 5% each year but Europe failing to cure majority of multidrug-resistant patients](#)

NEWS

[Belarus improves laboratory diagnostics for TB and MDR-TB](#)

24 February 2014

The national TB programme in Belarus has adopted new clinical guidelines for laboratory diagnosis of TB in accordance with the recommendations of a 2011 WHO review of the programme.

The new guidelines were developed by specialists of the Republican Scientific and Practical Centre of Pulmonology and Tuberculosis of Minsk in collaboration with experts from WHO and the Supranational Tuberculosis Reference Laboratory in Stockholm, Sweden. They include a description of the rapid diagnostic test for early detection of TB and MDR-TB.

[WHO Collaborating Centre on Prevention and Control of Tuberculosis in Prisons](#)

The Medical Department of the Ministry of Justice of Azerbaijan has been providing state of the art health care to prison inmates for many years. WHO has had more than two decades of successful collaboration with the Department which is an internationally recognized centre for the control of TB and MDR-TB and has served as a demonstration site for representatives of many countries in the European Region and beyond. The Department will be working as a WHO Collaborating Centre.

[Young TB scientists annual conference in Russian Federation](#)

Twenty-two young scientists presented their research findings in the field of TB control at the Annual Conference of Young TB Scientists which is traditionally devoted to World TB Day and held at the Central TB Research Institute in the Russian Federation. 88 abstracts from Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, Ukraine and Uzbekistan were submitted and published in the Conference proceedings.

The 2014 TB research contest for young scientists was also launched at the Conference.

[USAID and WHO launch new partnership in Kyrgyzstan](#)

In order to scale up technical assistance to the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, WHO has received a grant from United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The overarching goal of the grant is to improve stewardship and governance of the Ministry of Health and relevant national bodies to increase programme efficiency and ensure equitable access to quality services to prevent and control TB and M/XDR-TB in the country.

COUNTRY IN FOCUS: HUNGARY

Hungary, with a population of 10 million and an estimated 1500 (1300-1700) incident TB cases and 130(120-160) deaths every year from TB, is defined as a country with a low TB incidence. Although some of its neighbouring countries (Croatia, Romania, Serbia and Ukraine) have significantly higher rates, TB epidemiology in Hungary has shown a decreasing trend since 2000, after a plateau during the period 1992-2000 when migration increased significantly. There is a wide range of TB notifications from 4.9 to 25 cases per 100 000 population among the 10 counties in Hungary, with the highest rates in the north-eastern areas of Miskolc, Nyíregyháza and Debrecen, as well as Budapest and Szekszard.

Allocation of resources for TB control is also disproportionate across the country and up to 65% of the overall budget is used for active case-finding in the general population. Moreover the treatment success rate for new bacteriologically confirmed pulmonary TB patients was 57% in 2009 (significantly below the target of 85%) and only one third of new pulmonary TB cases were bacteriologically confirmed in 2010.

Following a request by the Ministry of National Resources on 26 April 2012, WHO/Europe and ECDC organized a joint country visit to Hungary on 22–25 May 2012.

The goals set in 2012 were to:

- to provide a comprehensive overview of tuberculosis (TB) prevention, control and care in the country
- to present the health authorities with the key recommendations and suggested actions to improve TB prevention, control and care

The recommendations were:

- Hungary needs to maintain its commitment to the prevention and control of TB and M/XDR-TB
- Develop a national TB action plan which reallocates financial resources in accordance with international guidelines and includes a monitoring framework with national targets for TB control
- Improve ambulatory care of TB patients and directly observed treatment (DOT) in order to improve treatment adherence and outcomes
- Implement the planned reorganization of the TB laboratory network
- Establish a single coordination platform (e.g. a national Stop TB Partnership forum) for tuberculosis prevention and control, involving civil society organizations, the private sector and other stakeholders

The achievements since 2012:

The Ministry is preparing a new SMART action plan which will scale up TB prevention with a vision to eliminate TB in Hungary. There is another pilot initiative drafted in the new health system strategy of the Ministry that aims to launch a new policy coordinator mechanism to strengthen the policy management of the NTP.

The Ministry has also changed the mandatory CXR screening for the general population to focus more on at-risk groups.

The national guideline for treatment of TB has been updated and will be published in the coming months.

For more information:

[Extensive review of TB prevention, care and control services in Hungary](#)

[Hungary implementing recommendations from WHO/ECDC joint programme review](#)

21 March 2014

Following WHO/ECDC recommendations the Hungarian Ministry of Human Resources has set up a national forum for partnerships which will meet for the first time on 21 March 2014. The new national forum will involve all stakeholders in TB control, in addition to the health sector, improving leadership and participatory governance for health, based on the Health 2020, the European policy framework supporting action across government and society for health.

RECENTLY PUBLISHED

[Tuberculosis surveillance and monitoring in Europe 2014](#)

WHO/Europe and ECDC collect analyse and publish TB surveillance and monitoring data on an annual basis. WHO/ECDC have just released their sixth joint surveillance report.

[Diagnostic and treatment policies for childhood tuberculosis in high-TB priority countries in eastern Europe](#)

On 1 October 2013 WHO and global partners launched a roadmap to end TB deaths in children worldwide. The roadmap identifies key actions that must be taken, including increased and targeted research, partnerships between key stakeholders, and strategic economic investment.

[BCG vaccination: where are we in Europe?](#)

A WHO/Europe Task Force provides the latest evidence and a coherent policy for use of Bacillus Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccination in Europe.

[Drug-resistant tuberculosis in the WHO European Region: An analysis of surveillance data](#)

A review of the latest information about levels of anti-TB drug resistance in the WHO European Region and time-trends in MDR-TB over the past 15 years.

[Collaborative action on tuberculosis and alcohol abuse in Estonia](#)

Estonia has the highest per capita alcohol consumption in Europe. Alcohol consumption and its associated alcohol use disorders are seen as major obstacles to increasing the treatment success achieved under the National TB Programme.

[Review of the National Tuberculosis Programme in the Republic of Moldova](#)

The review of the National TB Programme took place from 4 to 15 February 2013. Twelve international and seven national experts participated, visiting 18 districts and 3 municipalities, the autonomous region of Gagauzia and the Transnistria region. The review team then developed a strategic plan to improve treatment compliance and reduce loss to treatment follow up which is incorporated in the roadmap attached to the report (available in English and in Russian).

[2013 Revision of Protocol 4. Management of tuberculosis and HIV co-infection action on tuberculosis](#)

WHO/Europe is revising five clinical protocols on treatments of and care for people with HIV and AIDS, which were part of the 13 protocols set combined in one volume in 2007. These protocols are the cornerstone of WHO's efforts to ensure universal access to treatment and care for people living with HIV (available in English and in Russian).

[Regional workshop on tuberculosis, ethics and human rights](#)

The workshop was held at the WHO Regional Office for Europe in Copenhagen, Denmark, on 16 October 2013 with the objective to share best practice and discuss ways of solving the human-rights and ethical problems related to the involuntary isolation and/or involuntary treatment of people with TB and M/XDR-TB and the compassionate use of new drugs.

[Regional workshop on models of care for multidrug-resistant tuberculosis](#)

17 October 2013

Innovative models of cost-effective outpatient care tailored to patients' needs, have been introduced in countries as an alternative to inpatient care. In order to promote them, WHO/Europe held a workshop in Copenhagen, Denmark, on 17 October 2013 with the participation of priority countries, including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

UPCOMING EVENTS

[\(no web-link\) Structured Operational Research and Training Initiative \(SORT IT\), eastern Europe](#)

31 March – 5 April 2014

In line with The Consolidated Action Plan to Prevent and Combat Multidrug- and Extensively Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis in the WHO European Region, 2011–2015, WHO/Europe has been leading the Structured Operational Research and Training Initiative (SORT IT) eastern Europe course, 2013-2014. 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. The third workshop of the SORT IT eastern Europe course will be held in Tallinn, Estonia 31 March – 5 April 2014. The course includes participants from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Latvia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

[\(no web-link\) Structured Operational Research and Training Initiative \(SORT IT\), central Asia](#)

19–30 May 2014

In addition to the SORT IT eastern Europe course, WHO/Europe is leading the SORT IT central Asia course 2014-2015. This will be the first SORT IT course taught in Russian and held in central Asia. The first two workshops will take place at the Astana Medical University in Astana, Kazakhstan 19–30 May 2014.

[Tuberculosis Technical Assistance Mechanism \(TBTEAM\) European regional meeting](#)

2–3 June 2014

In collaboration with WHO headquarters and the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM), WHO/Europe is planning a two-day regional TBTEAM meeting for national TB control programmes (NTPs) and GFATM TB Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) representatives in Copenhagen, Denmark on 2–3 June 2014.

The main aim is to discuss GFATM new funding model (NFM), national TB strategic plans, country concept note development and related technical assistance needs. During the event, the countries that are more advanced in the process will also share their experience.

[\(no web-link\) Review of the National TB Programme in Bulgaria](#)

2-9 June 2014

The review will be jointly conducted by ECDC and WHO/Europe will provide recommendations to the Ministry of Health for possible improvements to support the development of the concept note that the Country Coordinating Mechanism will submit to the new funding model of The Global Fund.

[\(no web-link\) Review of the National TB Programme in Uzbekistan](#)

19-29 May 2014

The review will provide recommendations to the Ministry of Health to further improve TB prevention, care and control in the country. Furthermore, it will inform the updating of the TB national strategic plan and the subsequent concept note development for TB to the Global Fund within the framework of the NFM.

RECENT EVENTS

[\(no web-link\) Review of the National TB Programme in Romania](#)

10-21 March 2014, Romania

From 10 to 21 March 2014, 11 international experts and 16 national experts visited facilities of different level of health care in 18 counties of Romania and in Bucharest. The review team developed key recommendations for improving prevention and control of TB and drug resistant TB in the country and discussed them with the Minister of Health on 21 March. More detailed analysis and recommendations will be included in the final report of the review, expected to be finalized by August 2014.

[Training of trainers on pharmacovigilance for patients on treatment for drug-resistant tuberculosis](#)

3-7 March 2014, Copenhagen, Denmark

[High Level Working Group discusses chemotherapy treatment for TB](#)

26 November 2013, Moscow, Russian Federation

[\(no web-link\) Review of the National TB Programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)

11-22 November 2013, Bosnia and Herzegovina

From 11 to 22 November 2013, four international experts visited 30 facilities and institutions in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbska Republic and Brčko District. The review team developed key recommendations for improving prevention and control of TB and drug resistant TB in the country and discussed them with the health authorities in Banja Luka on 22 November. More detailed analysis and recommendations will be included in the final report of the review, to be published soon.

[Regional workshop on results-based management for tuberculosis control](#)

14–15 November 2013, Copenhagen, Denmark

[Consultation for the development of a Global Fund TB strategy in eastern Europe and central Asia \(EECA\)](#)

13 November 2013, Copenhagen, Denmark

[8th Meeting of European Technical Advisory Group on Tuberculosis Control](#)

12 November 2013, Copenhagen, Denmark

[2nd Meeting of the Regional Collaborating Committee on Tuberculosis Control and Care \(RCC–TB\)](#)

11 November 2013, Copenhagen, Denmark

QUICK FACT

[Three million people are ‘missed’](#)

Approximately three million people (equal to one in three people falling ill with TB) are currently being missed by health systems. Insufficient resources and limited capacity to find and care for people who are “hard-to-reach”, (often because they are excluded from the formal or state health

system) are the root causes of this problem.

Source: [WHO Global tuberculosis report 2013](#)

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