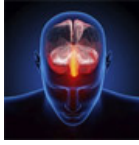


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Health » Reuters

Tuberculosis Now Rivals AIDS As Leading Cause of Death, Says WHO

The news reflects the dramatic gains in access to HIV/AIDS treatment in the past decade, which has helped many people

 REUTERS

October 28, 2015 | 0

By Julie Steenhuysen

CHICAGO (Reuters) - For the first time, tuberculosis infections rivaled HIV/AIDS as a leading cause of death from infectious diseases, the World Health Organization said in a report released on Wednesday.

It found that during 2014, 1.1 million people died of TB in 2014. During the same period, HIV/AIDS killed 1.2 million people globally, including 400,000 who were infected with both HIV and TB.

Dr. Mario Raviglione, director of the WHO TB program, said the report reflects the dramatic gains in access to HIV/AIDS treatment in the past decade, which has helped many people survive their infections. But it also reflects disparities in funding for the two global killers.

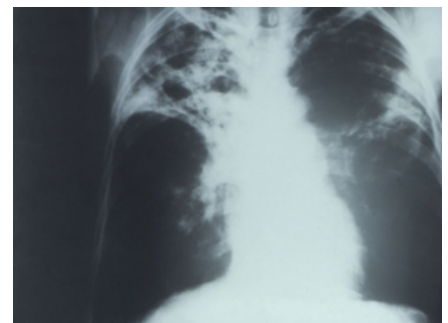
"The good news is that TB intervention has saved some 43 million lives since 2000," but given that most cases of TB can be successfully treated, the death rate remained "unacceptably high," Raviglione said in a telephone interview.

The report features data from 205 countries and territories on all aspects of TB, including drug-resistant forms, research and development and financing.

It found that 6 million new cases of TB were reported to the WHO in 2014, fewer than two-thirds of the 9.6 million people worldwide estimated to have fallen sick with TB last year.

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This is an anteroposterior (AP) x-ray of a patient's chest, who was diagnosed with bilateral pulmonary tuberculosis.

CDC

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Among the estimated 480,000 cases of multi-drug resistant TB in 2014, only one in four was diagnosed.

Dr. Grania Brigden, interim medical director of Médecins Sans Frontières, or Doctors Without Borders, said the report "should serve as a wake-up call that enormous work still needs to be done to reduce the burden of this ancient, yet curable disease."

Funding disparities were a key issue, Raviglione said, noting that international funding for HIV/AIDS is 10 times higher than for TB, with \$8 billion spent on HIV/AIDS interventions, compared with a total of \$800,000 spent on TB.

Part of that disparity is because HIV/AIDS largely affects resource-poor countries in Africa, whereas TB is more prevalent in countries such as India and China, which are better able to finance their own domestic efforts to address TB infections.

Even so, there remains a \$1.4 billion gap in the amount of funding needed for TB interventions in 2015.

Raviglione said it is time to start funding TB at a level that can make even more of a difference in curbing global deaths.



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