

WHO publishes Global tuberculosis report 2013

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The World Health Organization (WHO) published yesterday the 18th global report on tuberculosis (TB) [1] in a series that started in 1997. It provides a comprehensive and up-to-date assessment of the TB epidemic and of the progress made in TB prevention, care and control at global, regional and country level, using data reported by 197 countries and territories that account collectively for over 99% of the TB cases in the world.

TB remains a major global health problem although TB treatment has saved the lives of more than 22 million people, according to the report, which also reveals that the number of people who fell ill with TB in 2012 was 8.6 million, with 1.3 million TB deaths globally (including 320,000 deaths among HIV-positive people).

Nearly 20 years after the WHO declaration of TB as a global public health emergency, major progress has

been made towards 2015 global targets set within the context of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Two years ahead of the deadline, a special 'Countdown to 2015' supplement to this year's report provides full information on the progress to the international TB targets. It assesses the progress towards the 2015 targets and the top priority actions needed to achieve and/or move beyond them.

The report underlines two major challenges: the drug-resistant TB crisis and the fact that around 3 million people (one in three people falling ill with TB) are currently being 'missed' by health systems. A further challenge identified relates to the TB and HIV co-epidemic: while there has been significant progress in the last decade in scaling-up antiretroviral treatment for TB patients living with HIV, less than 60% of the patients were receiving antiretroviral drugs in 2012.

References

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