1.9. TUBERCULOSIS

Tuberculosis (TB) is the leading cause of death from an infectious disease in the Asia/Pacific region. In 2012, there were 5.5 million new TB cases in the region, out of 8.6 million new cases worldwide, 1.3 million including people with HIV died of TB globally. Most of these TB cases and deaths occur disproportionately among men, but the burden of disease among women is also high as it remains among the top three killers for them in the world. Most cases of TB are preventable if diagnosed and the right treatment is provided. The internationally recommended Stop TB Strategy is recognised as being efficient and cost-effective.

TB was declared a global health emergency by WHO in 1993 and the UN set a MDG target to halt the spread and to begin to reverse its incidence by 2015. The WHO co-ordinated Stop TB Partnership also set targets of halving TB prevalence and deaths by 2015, compared with a baseline of 1990.

Four of the five countries in the world with the largest number of incident cases in 2012 were in the Asia/Pacific region: India (2.2 million), China (1.0 million), Indonesia (0.46 million) and Pakistan (0.41 million) (Figure 1.10.1, left panel). Slightly less than half of the world’s burden of tuberculosis was found in the region and India and China accounted for 26% and 12% of the total number of cases, respectively.

Prevalence rates were highest in Cambodia, Papua New Guinea, the Lao PDR and DPR Korea, with over 500 cases per 100,000 population in 2012 (Figure 1.9.1, right panel). The unweighted average prevalence rate across 22 Asian countries in 2012 was 286, more than 15 times the OECD average. In Australia and New Zealand, TB prevalence rates were lowest at less than ten.

Tuberculosis claims the lives of 940,000 people without HIV every year (WHO, 2013i). In the Asia/Pacific region, mortality rates were high in Cambodia, Papua New Guinea, Myanmar and Bangladesh with over 40 deaths per 100,000 populations (Figure 1.9.1, right panel). In the Asia/Pacific region, high-quality TB services have expanded and many cases are treated, reaching the treatment success rate of 86% in 2011 (Figure 1.9.2). Although the average detection rate in the region is generally high, there were a large number of undetected cases in some countries such as Lao PDR and Bangladesh in 2012. The detection rate was as low as 30% in the former and slightly less than one in two cases were detected in the latter, suggesting that they are lagging behind in achieving effective coverage.

The Asia/Pacific region is rising to the challenges presented by TB, with incidence, prevalence and mortality declining steadily since 1990. In about half of the countries, incidence and prevalence rates have been halved since 1990 (Figure 1.9.3). However, these indicators suggest that DPR Korea, Bangladesh and Papua New Guinea need to make more progress in stopping TB, and despite the MDG target achievement, further efforts are still needed in Cambodia, the Lao PDR, Mongolia and the Philippines as the prevalence rates are still high.

The region still faces important challenges in TB control, including providing services to those in greatest need, especially the poor and vulnerable. HIV-TB co-infection, the emergence of drug-resistant strains, funding gaps and the need for greater technical expertise all remain threats to progress (WHO, 2011b, 2012a). With regards to multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB), the burden is high in China with 5.7% of new cases with MDR-TB. This proportion is also high in Myanmar and the Philippines, at above 4%, Pakistan (3.5%) and Viet Nam (2.7%) (WHO, 2013i). Treatment of MDR-TB can take up to two years and is far more costly than drug susceptible strains.

**Definition and comparability**

Tuberculosis (TB) is a contagious disease, caused by the Mycobacterium tuberculosis bacteria. Tuberculosis usually attacks the lungs but can also affect other parts of the body. It is spread through the air, when people who have the disease cough, sneeze, talk or spit. Most infections in humans are latent and without symptoms, with about one in ten latent infections eventually progressing to active disease. If left untreated, active TB kills between 20% and 70% of its victims within ten years depending on severity.

The TB incidence rate is the number of new cases of the disease estimated to occur in a year, per 100,000 population. The TB prevalence rate is the total number of persons with the disease at a particular time, per 100,000 population. TB mortality does not include TB/HIV as per ICD-10.
### 1.9.1. Estimate of the burden of disease caused by tuberculosis, 2012

#### Incidence

![Incidence Chart](chart.png)

### 1.9.2. Tuberculosis treatment success for new smear-positive cases and case detection, 2011-12

![Treatment Success Chart](chart.png)

### 1.9.3. Tuberculosis incidence and prevalence rates, change over 1990-2012

![Prevalence and Mortality Chart](chart.png)

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**Note:** 95% confidence intervals or 2.5th and 97.5th centiles of distribution represented by H.

**Source:** WHO GHO 2014.