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Opinion

What Needs to be Done as Urgent for Tuberculosis Control and Care

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The global tuberculosis (TB) situation is a significant public health challenge that affects millions of people worldwide. TB remains one of the top infectious disease killers globally, with millions of new cases each year. Despite progress, TB still causes a high number of deaths, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. Many countries have made significant strides in TB treatment, with high success rates in curing patient. The emergence of multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) and extensively drug-resistant TB (XDR-TB) poses a major challenge to TB control efforts. The World Health Organization (WHO) leads global efforts to combat TB through initiatives like the end TB strategy, aiming for a world free of TB by 2035. The global fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria provides substantial funding and support for TB control programs worldwide.

Countries in regions like South Asia, Africa, and parts of Eastern Europe have the highest TB burdens. Different regions adopt tailored strategies to address their specific TB challenges, considering factors like healthcare infrastructure and socio-economic conditions.

Continued research and development of new diagnostic tools, treatments, and vaccines are crucial for advancing TB control.

Collaboration across sectors, including health, social services, and communities, is essential for a comprehensive approach to TB control.

The global TB situation is complex, but ongoing efforts and innovations offer hope for reducing the burden of this disease.

Enhanced case detection: Scale up active case finding in high-risk and underserved areas. Earlier detection both prevents further spread of the disease and can be life-saving.

Accessible diagnostics: Expand diagnostic facilities with advanced tools like GeneXpert machines and chest X-rays.

Comprehensive treatment: Ensure free, uninterrupted access to TB medications and follow-up care.

Integrated care: Combine TB treatment with support for comorbidities like diabetes and HIV within health systems.

Community-based care: Train local health workers to provide treatment and monitor patients at home. Empower them, create local innovation to solve problems.

Nutrition support: Distribute food or supplements to improve recovery and prevent relapse.

Awareness campaigns: Conduct mass education initiatives to reduce stigma and encourage early testing. Establish TB Champions, Advocate for local resources.

Vaccination programs: Promote BCG vaccinations for children and research new TB vaccines.

Preventive therapy: Provide prophylactic treatment to close contacts of TB patients.

Data-driven monitoring: Strengthen surveillance systems to track cases, outcomes, and resistance patterns. Make interoperable all applications to a common platform.

Partnerships: Collaborate with international organizations for funding and technical support.

Policy integration: Align TB programs with national health strategies for sustainability.

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