

STATEMENT

On World TB Day European Society says there is a long way to go before scientific discoveries are turned into efficient diagnostics and treatment

24 MARCH 2009, MUNICH: As the global community marks World TB Day, the European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (ESCMID) says drug-resistant tuberculosis is not being addressed with sufficient speed or commitment, nor is its potential threat sufficiently understood in Europe.

“Far too many people still fail to get accurate diagnosis of tuberculosis, and there is a long way to go before promising scientific discoveries are turned into more accessible and more efficient diagnostics”, said Giuseppe Cornaglia, ESCMID President.

TB in Europe today:

- In 2006 there were more than 420,000 reported cases of TB in Europe
- Whilst TB cases in the region decreased by 4% between 2002-2006, there were substantial increases in Greece, Sweden and the UK
- 20% of cases were of foreign origin – two-thirds from Asia or Africa
- Tuberculosis patients in parts of Eastern Europe and Central Asia are 10 times more likely to have multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) than in the rest of the world
- Six out of the top ten global TB hotspots are Estonia, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, parts of the Russian Federation and Uzbekistan, with drug resistance in new patients as high as 14%
- HIV prevalence among TB cases increased in Estonia and Latvia 2000-2006, and more than doubled in the UK¹.

The multidrug-resistant TB strains (MDR and XDR) pose formidable challenges for therapeutic treatment in Europe and beyond, and represent the most striking example of how antimicrobial resistance may affect therapeutic attitude and our lifestyle.

“ESCMID is focusing on both diagnostic and therapeutic issues related to the current management of tuberculosis, with the aim of fostering scientific research, to improve diagnosis and therapy, and to cooperate with public programmes to achieve better information about tuberculosis and a more efficient role of public health systems in controlling the spread of MDR/XDR mycobacterial strains.” Giuseppe Cornaglia, ESCMID President.

For more information go to www.escmid.org or www.stoptb.org
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ESCMID is a non-profit organisation dedicated to improving the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of infectious diseases in Europe and beyond. The Society promotes and supports research, education and training and shares good medical practice in the infection disciplines to build capacity throughout Europe.

¹ World Health Organization , Global Tuberculosis Control: Surveillance, Planning, Financing Report 2008