

## ***Global epidemiology of tuberculosis: an overview***

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How much TB is there in the world today, and where? What are the main trends, globally and regionally? How hard is it to control TB, and how well are we actually doing in TB control? For how long will we be stuck with "short?course chemotherapy", and what can we expect from new technology? The answers to some of these questions, in brief, are that TB still ranks among the top 10 causes of illness and death worldwide. Whilst the global incidence of TB appears to be slowly increasing, there are striking regional variations in trends. Most alarmingly, TB has been driven sharply upwards by the spread of HIV in Africa, and by the breakdown of health and health services in countries of the former Soviet Union. The successful control of TB in areas that have high HIV prevalence, high levels of drug resistance, and poor social and economic conditions, will certainly require a mixture of preventive and curative measures, but the WHO DOTS strategy must, for the time being, remain prominent in whatever mix is chosen. By the end of 2005, the DOTS strategy was treating nearly 60% of the world? TB patients. There is mounting evidence that TB control is having an impact on incidence, prevalence and deaths in a variety of high-burden countries, but the data now coming in also point to some serious obstacles. In this lecture, I will explore the strengths and weaknesses of the current approach to TB control, the role of new technology, the prospects for meeting the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, and for eliminating TB sometime during the 21st century.