

# TBeat

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## **Global Tuberculosis Progress Reversed by COVID-19 Pandemic**

The Lancet Respiratory Medicine, Volume 9, Issue 12, E118-119, December 01, 2021

For the first time in more than a decade, global deaths from tuberculosis have increased (from 1.4 million to 1.5 million), not because of any direct resurgence of this ancient disease—the cause has been the COVID-19 pandemic, which has fractured and strained health systems in all nations from the wealthiest to the poorest. While countries have struggled with implementing, lifting, and reimplementing restrictions, access to all other medical services—from complex cancer treatment in high-income countries to provision of tuberculosis diagnosis and treatment in high-burden countries—has suffered. This painful reversal of years of progress in the fight against tuberculosis is detailed in WHO's 2021 [Global TB Report](#).

Challenges with providing and accessing essential tuberculosis services have meant that many people with tuberculosis were not diagnosed in 2020. The number of people newly diagnosed with tuberculosis and those reported to national governments fell from 7.1 million in 2019 to 5.8 million in 2020. Furthermore, WHO estimates that some 4.1 million people currently suffer from tuberculosis but have not been diagnosed with the disease or have not officially reported to national authorities. This figure is up from 2.9 million in 2019.

The countries that contributed most to the global reduction in tuberculosis notifications between 2019 and 2020 were India (41%), Indonesia (14%), the Philippines (12%), and China (8%). These and 12 other countries accounted for 93% of the total global drop in notifications. The increase in the number of tuberculosis deaths also occurred mainly in the 30 countries with the highest burden of tuberculosis.

Due to the delayed effects from COVID-19, tuberculosis deaths are projected to rise again in 2022 while the world readjusts to a new normality and services resume. The report bases this projection on country-specific models developed for the 16 countries that accounted for almost all of the global drop in tuberculosis notifications between 2019 and 2020, and for 71% of the estimated global number of incident cases in 2020. “These models suggest that the negative impacts on global tuberculosis mortality and incidence in 2020 will become much worse in 2021 and beyond”, said Dr Tereza Kasaeva, Director of WHO's Global Tuberculosis Programme, in an e-mail to *The Lancet Respiratory*



## ***Global tuberculosis progress reversed by COVID-19 pandemic continued***

*Medicine.* She explains, “The impact on incidence is delayed, with an excess incidence of about 5–10% around 2022, as compared with the level predicted in the absence of COVID-19. The modelling does not yet account for the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on broader tuberculosis determinants, such as income levels and undernutrition, which increase the probability of developing tuberculosis disease among people already infected. A lot will depend on the effectiveness of mitigation strategies, speed of restoring access to essential tuberculosis services, and on the coverage and effectiveness of global COVID-19 vaccination programmes.”

Click here for the full publication: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanres/article/PIIS2213-2600\(21\)00496-3/fulltext#%20](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanres/article/PIIS2213-2600(21)00496-3/fulltext#%20)

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## **Dear Colleague: COVID-19 Vaccination and Testing for TB Infection**



Dear Colleague:

On January 7, 2021, we sent out a Dear Colleague letter about the timing of COVID-19 mRNA vaccinations and the immune-based tests for *M. tuberculosis* infection, that is, the tuberculin skin test (TST) and interferon gamma release assays (IGRAs). At that time, we were responding to questions as to whether the new COVID-19 mRNA vaccines could change the results from those tests. To date, no studies of TST or IGRA results after COVID-19 vaccination have been published. Of what is known about the immunologic response to COVID-19 mRNA vaccination, nothing would be expected to change TST or IGRA results.

As of today, August 31, 2021, CDC is posting new recommendations about COVID-19 vaccination and the timing of immune-based tests for tuberculosis infection, such as the TST and IGRA, on its COVID-19 website (at <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/covid-19-vaccines-us.html>): “COVID-19 vaccination should not be delayed because of testing for TB infection. Testing for TB infection with one of the immune-based methods, either the tuberculin skin test (TST) or an interferon release assay (IGRA), can be done before, after, or during the same encounter as COVID-19 vaccination.

“TSTs and IGRAs were previously recommended to be administered > 4 weeks after completion of COVID-19 vaccination to minimize potential interference between vaccination and TB testing. This was out of an abundance of caution during a period when these vaccines were new. However, given logistical challenges faced in delaying TB infection testing, the recommendation has been updated so that these tests may now be administered without regard to timing of COVID-19 vaccination.”

Patients who have active TB disease or an illness that is being evaluated as active TB disease can receive a COVID-19 vaccine (note: the presence of a moderate or severe acute illness is a precaution to administration of all vaccines).

Thank you for your continued hard work in the COVID-19 response, and in all that you do to continue to prevent and control TB.

Sincerely,

Terence Chorba, Chief, Field Services Branch

Division of Tuberculosis Elimination National Center or HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD,  
and TB Prevention Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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# Global Tuberculosis Report 2021

## Overview

Each year, the WHO Global TB Report provides a comprehensive and up-to-date assessment of the TB epidemic, and of progress in prevention, diagnosis and treatment of the disease, at global, regional and country levels. This is done in the context of global TB commitments, strategies and targets.

The 2021 edition of the report has been produced in a new and more web-centric format. This is designed to make the content available in smaller (more “bite-sized”) chunks that are easier to read, digest, navigate and use. There is a short and slim report PDF with 30 pages of main content plus six short annexes. This is accompanied by expanded and more detailed digital content on [web pages](#). The total amount of content remains similar to that of previous years.



Please note that direct comparisons between estimates of TB disease burden in the latest report and previous reports are not appropriate. The most recent time-series of estimates are published in this global TB report. [WHO]

To download the report, click here: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240037021>

Global TB reports from previous years can be found [here](#).

## Available Job Postings



### Heartland National TB Center

#### Training and Education Developer

Apply at: <https://uthct.taleo.net/careersection/careers.uthealth.org/jobdetail.ftl?job=21000285&tz=GMT-05%3A00&tzname=America%2FChicago>

Under the direction of the Administrative Services Officer (Director of Education), the Training and Education Developer performs highly complex administrative duties to plan, develop, coordinate, participate in and evaluate all aspects of education and training including identified special projects. Projects will include (not limited to) needs assessments; product development and review; translation efforts (Spanish, verbal and written); education activities; and other special projects as identified by organizational and grant opportunities.

#### Coming soon! Administrative Assistant

Look for an email blast in the upcoming weeks regarding where to apply for the new position.



# TB.BIT

Dari



## NEW—What You Need to Know About Tuberculosis—Translated in Dari and Pashto

Available for download, print copies will be available soon.

Pashto



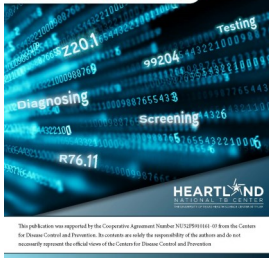
This flipbook is available in Dari and can be used by healthcare personnel to provide basic information and education on latent TB infection and active TB disease while working with patients and families from the Afghan refugee community. Using the flipbook can help raise understanding and awareness of TB in the community and help people with active TB understand the disease and the importance of seeking care and completing treatment.

Dari Download— [What You Need to Know About Tuberculosis \(Dari\)](#)

Pashto Download— [What You Need to Know About Tuberculosis \(Pashto\)](#)

Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment of Latent Tuberculosis Infection (LTBI) in Primary Care Settings

Tips for Coding and Billing



## NEW—Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment of Latent Tuberculosis Infection (LTBI) in Primary Care Settings: Tips for Coding and Billing

Available in hard copy and for download.

Download here—[https://www.heartlandntbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Screening\\_Diagnosis\\_and\\_Treatment\\_of\\_Latent\\_Tuberculosis\\_Infection\\_LTBI\\_in\\_Primary\\_Care\\_Settings.pdf](https://www.heartlandntbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Screening_Diagnosis_and_Treatment_of_Latent_Tuberculosis_Infection_LTBI_in_Primary_Care_Settings.pdf)

Product Order Form—<https://www.heartlandntbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/orderform.pdf>

# Resources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Tuberculosis Elimination—<http://cdc.gov/tb/>

Centers of Excellence (COE) TB Training and Education Products—<https://sntc.medicine.ufl.edu/rtmccproducts.aspx>

Find TB Resources—<https://findtbresources.cdc.gov/>

National TB Controllers Association—<http://www.tbcontrollers.org>

Program Collaboration and Service Integration (PCSI) - <http://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/programintegration/Default.htm>

TB Education and Training Network—<http://www.cdc.gov/tb/education/Tbetn/default.htm>

Tuberculosis Epidemiologic Studies Consortium (TBESC) - <http://www.cdc.gov/tb/topic/research/TBESC/default.htm>

\*If your organization has any additional links for TB resources that you would like published, please send them to [Alysia.Wayne@uthct.edu](mailto:Alysia.Wayne@uthct.edu)\*

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# Trainings

## 2021 HNTC Training Calendar\*\*

Date(s)	Course	Location
January 11, 18, 25, and Feb 1	Introduction to TB Nurse Case Management 1:00-2:30 pm CST	Online
March 24	World TB Day	San Antonio, Texas*
March 29-31	TB Nurse Case Management	San Antonio, Texas*
April 1	Tuberculin Skin Test (TST) Practicum	San Antonio, Texas*
<b>Please refer to the Heartland website for the most recent updates of dates and locations.</b>		
April 26-28	Clinical TB Intensive	Houston, Texas*
April 29	Clinical Pediatric TB Intensive	Houston, Texas*
May 13—18	ATS 2022 **conducted by the American Thoracic Society <a href="https://conference.thoracic.org/">https://conference.thoracic.org/</a>	San Francisco, California
May 24—27	2022 National TB Conference **conducted by the National TB Controllers Association <a href="http://www.tbcontrollers.org/ntca-2/">http://www.tbcontrollers.org/ntca-2/</a>	Palm Springs, California (possibly virtual)

*\*if in-person trainings are allowed*

*\*\*dates subject to change*

\*\*Please refer to the website for any future trainings and detailed information.\*\*

Please visit our website: <https://www.heartlandntbc.org/training/>

Proposed topics are subject to change; check website for the latest updates.

**TRAININGS ARE POSTED TO THE WEBSITE  
AS THEY ARE CONFIRMED**

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Vacant

The **MISSION** of the Heartland National TB Center is to build capacity with our partners. We will share expertise in the treatment and prevention of tuberculosis by: developing and implementing cutting-edge trainings, delivering expert medical consultation, providing technical assistance, and designing innovative educational and consultative products.

The **VISION** of Heartland National TB Center is to provide *excellence, expertise, innovation* in training, medical consultation, and product development to reduce the impact of tuberculosis in our region.

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