The Fight Against Tuberculosis

Tuberculosis is caused by a bacteria called Mycobacterium tuberculosis and primarily affects the lungs. TB is spread through the air when people with lung TB cough, sneeze, or spit. A person can become infected by only a few germs. Approximately 10 million individuals contract tuberculosis (TB) every year. Despite the availability of preventative and therapeutic measures, 1.5 million individuals lose their lives as a result of tuberculosis (TB) annually, making it the leading infectious disease-related cause of mortality globally.

Symptoms

The symptoms of tuberculosis are often mild for many months, resulting in delayed diagnosis and an increased risk of transmission. The most common symptoms of tuberculosis (TB) disease are as follows:

- Prolonged cough
- Chest pain
- Weakness or fatigue
- Weight loss
- Fever
- Night sweats

Several factors can increase an individual's risk of developing tuberculosis. These include:

- Diabetes (high blood sugar)
- Weakened immune system (for example, HIV or AIDS)
- Being malnourished
- Tobacco use

Infection with the TB bacteria occurs when the bacteria become active within the body. The infection may develop into TB disease due to a weakening immune system. If the healthcare provider

suspects a patient to have tuberculosis (TB) disease, the patient will be referred for diagnostic testing. In the case of suspected lung TB disease, the patient will be requested to provide a sputum sample for examination for TB bacteria.

Treatment

Tuberculosis (TB) is a curable disease. A conventional six-month antibiotic regimen is employed for treatment purposes. The most commonly prescribed medications for tuberculosis are rifampicin and isoniazid. These medications require daily ingestion for a period of four to six months to be fully effective, and discontinuation of the medications prematurely or without medical guidance carries significant risks. This can result in the development of drug resistance in the remaining tuberculosis bacteria. In some cases, the TB bacteria exhibit resistance to standard drugs. The treatment of drug-resistant TB is a longer and more complex process.

Source:

World Health Organization. 2023. Tuberculosis

World Health Organization. 2018. Tuberculosis