



International Union Against
Tuberculosis and Lung Disease
Health solutions for the poor

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Preliminary Data Show High Success Rate for Dramatically Shortened Multidrug-resistant TB Treatment Option

Results Presented at 45th World Conference on Lung Health

Thursday, 30 October, 2014, Barcelona, Spain – A nine-month treatment regimen for multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) appears to be as effective as a 12-month regimen, according to data from two new studies being presented today at the 45th World Conference on Lung Health in Barcelona, Spain.

Preliminary data from an observational cohort study coordinated by The International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union) and conducted in nine African countries showed positive outcomes for the use of a shortened, nine-month treatment regimen used to treat (MDR-TB).

Data were presented on preliminary treatment outcomes for 208 patients who had completed four months of treatment. In sputum smear tests, where a laboratory technician examines a sample of a patient's sputum through a light microscope to visually confirm presence of TB bacteria, 74 per cent of patients had a negative test. In culture tests, where a test sample is placed in a petri dish to see if it will grow cultures of bacteria, 94 percent of tests were negative. Together these preliminary results suggest a high treatment success rate for the shortened, 9-month treatment option. The study was conducted in Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Central African Republic and Democratic Republic of Congo.

Another study, "High rate of successful outcome of a nine-month standardised treatment of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis in Niger," showed that of patients with MDR-TB had an 88.2% treatment success rate when administered a 9-month treatment regimen. All but one patient who had received follow-up TB tests 6 months after finishing treatment remained free of TB. The researchers will continue monitoring treatment outcomes until 24 months after treatment. The study was conducted in the country of Niger.

"These preliminary results from observational studies are a promising indication that a shortened treatment option for patients with multidrug-resistant TB is within reach," said I.D. Rusen, Senior Vice President for Research and Development of The International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease. "Treatment for MDR-TB is one of the most grueling experiences for both patients and healthcare workers alike. Our hope is that a shorter treatment option will lead to higher rates of treatment success."

The standard treatment for MDR-TB currently lasts up to 24 months. A 9-month treatment option therefore has the potential to make MDR-TB treatment significantly less burdensome for both patients and healthcare workers.

About MDR-TB

According to the World Health Organization, an estimated 480,000 people developed MDR-TB and an estimated 210,000 died from the disease in 2013. MDR-TB is defined as tuberculosis that is resistant to at least isoniazid and rifampicin, two of the most important first-line drugs typically used to treat TB.

About The Union

For nearly 100 years, The Union has drawn from the best scientific evidence and the skills, expertise and reach of its staff, consultants and membership in order to advance solutions to the most pressing public health challenges affecting people living in poverty around the world. With nearly 17,000 members and subscribers from 156 countries, The Union has its headquarters in Paris and regional offices in Africa, the Asia Pacific, Europe, Latin America, North America and South-East Asia. The Union's scientific departments focus on tuberculosis and HIV, lung health and non-communicable diseases, tobacco control and operational research.

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