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A Mini-Review of Tuberculosis: Historical Context and Future Challenges

Abigailmacias Paredesa*

Department of Respiratory, Sant Joan Despí Hospital, Barcelona, Spain

Mini Review

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***For Correspondence**: Abigailmacías Paredesa, Department of Respiratory, Hospital Moises Broggi, Hospitalet del Llobregat, Barcelona, Spain

E-mail: **draabigailmacias@gmail.com**

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ABSTRACT

Tuberculosis (TB) remains a persistent global public health challenge despite extensive efforts by the World Health Organization (WHO) and other health entities. The disease continues to spread due to various factors, including public ignorance, pandemics like HIV and COVID-19, and increased migration from high TB-incidence regions. Vulnerable populations, such as migrants and those with compromised immune systems, are at heightened risk of contracting TB and experiencing unsuccessful treatment outcomes.

Recent advancements in diagnostics, such as Interferon Gamma Release Assays (IGRAs) and molecular techniques have enhanced our ability to detect and Manage Tuberculosis (TB), including challenging forms like Multi Drug Resistant TB (MDR-TB) and Extensively Drug-Resistant TB (XDR-TB).

Despite these advancements, access to new and effective drugs remains limited in certain regions, complicating treatment efforts. WHO advocates for systematic screening and Directly Observed Therapy (DOT) to enhance treatment adherence and reduce recurrence rates. Economic analyses suggest that targeted screening of high-risk groups is cost-effective in low-incidence countries. Additionally, the development of new TB vaccines shows promise, with several candidates currently in phase three trials, potentially offering superior protection compared to the existing Bacille Calmette Guérin (BCG) vaccine.

Although significant progress has been made in TB diagnosis, treatment, and prevention, challenges related to drug resistance, access to care, and social determinants of health continue to hinder global eradication efforts. However, the ongoing development of shorter treatment regimens and the potential for new vaccines offer hope that TB

eradication could eventually be achieved.

Keywords: Tuberculosis; COVID-19; World health organization; HIV; Bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG); Vaccine

INTRODUCTION

Tuberculosis (TB) remains a major public health problem worldwide, despite extensive efforts by the World Health Organization (WHO), national governments and health care organizations to eradicate the disease. The WHO faces a challenge in making accurate predictions about the timeline for TB elimination, due to the many variables that are beyond its control.

There exists a prevalent misconception among affluent individuals and certain healthcare professionals that Tuberculosis (TB) has been completely eradicated, which contributes to a diminished awareness of its ongoing prevalence. The emergence of pandemics such as HIV and COVID-19 has further complicated this issue. The Incidence Density Rate (IDR) of HIV/TB can be effectively reduced through the implementation of antiretroviral therapy and comprehensive disease control strategies, particularly following the identification of HIV in 1984.

Additionally, the movement of populations significantly influences TB risk; for instance, in the Cologne-Bonn cohort, patients hailing from areas with high TB prevalence exhibited an increased likelihood of developing active TB. Tuberculosis remains a critical consideration in the differential diagnosis of respiratory illnesses. Furthermore, the conditions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, including prolonged confinement, limited living space, poverty, malnutrition, illness and overcrowding, have exacerbated the severity of the situation.

And lastly, migration; vulnerable groups (refugees and migrants) are more probable to develop Tuberculosis (TB), and the risk is especially high in first year of treatment. This is especially true for migrant populations, who are more likely to experience treatment failure, loss to follow-up and death [1-4]. TB control programs targeting migrants are implemented in only a few countries and involve both pre-migration and post-migration screening strategies. Pre-migration screening centers on recognizing Latent Tuberculosis Infection (LTBI) and surveying the expanded hazard of future movement to dynamic malady.

High risk transients are at that point taken after up with post-migration screening. As is well known, the Russian attack of Ukraine in 2022 has driven to large-scale movement to other European nations. This movement impacted the TB epidemiology, as Ukraine has a higher prevalence of TB and multidrug-resistant TB rates than the rest of countries [5,6].

LITERATURE REVIEW

WHO recommends systematic screening to detect TB in risk groups, but there are few studies to confirm whether it is a strategy that is worthwhile economically or whether it is better to wait for patients to go to the health system. Researchers from the Experimental Tuberculosis Unit (ETU) of the IGTP and Germans Trias Hospital, in collaboration with experts from the Barcelona Public Health Agency are actively involved in this field, have reviewed studies (16 years ago) that analyse cost-effectiveness of screening indicate that in countries with low TB incidence, targeted screening strategies can be economically beneficial, screening migrants from areas of high incidence and vulnerable populations such as individuals from isolated communities, malnutrition, homeless people or drug addicts, is a cost-effective strategy [7].

The manteaux Tuberculin Skin Test (TST) and Interferon Gamma Release Test (IGRA) are diagnostic tools for detecting *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* infection. IGRAs offer higher specificity for detecting *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* in diverse populations and have higher sensitivity than TST. In addition, IGRAs have a lower risk of cross-reactivity with BCG vaccine and other nontuberculous mycobacteria, less subjective interpretation, a shorter time frame, more rapid results and can identify false-negative TST results due to skin energy [8]. Only in the hospitals we have IGRAs that make difficult the screening at primary care.

Drug resistance has emerged as a significant global challenge, complicating TB control efforts. The most critical forms include the Rifampicin-Resistant TB (RR-TB) and Multidrug-Resistant TB (MDR-TB), which involves resistance to both the isoniazid and rifampicin. In expansion, resistance to fluoroquinolones characterizes pre-XDR-TB (pre-extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis), whereas XDR-TB (broadly drug-resistant tuberculosis) alludes to pre-XDR-TB with the expansion of resistance to linezolid, bed aquiline, or both.

Innovative symptomatic procedures, such as fluid culture strategies with nonstop development checking and medicate vulnerability testing and atomic science methods such as real-time PCR for nucleic corrosive enhancement, have essentially progressed demonstrative affectability and abbreviated reaction times. These approaches allow for the simultaneous detection of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* and rifampicin resistance. Cutting-edge molecular tests, such as Expert MTB/XDR and GenoType MTBDRsl, are now employed to diagnose pre-XDR-TB and analyze resistance markers for drugs including isoniazid, fluoroquinolones, amikacin, kanamycin, capreomycin and ethionamide. This advanced technology is currently limited to reference centers, necessitating justification for its use [9,10].

Between 1943 and 1963, a pivotal period of two decades, eleven drugs effective against *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* were identified, establishing the groundwork for anti-tuberculosis therapy and enabling the successful treatment of nearly all TB patients [11]. Currently, treatment regimens for drug-sensitive tuberculosis can be reduced from six months to four months.

In response to the emergence of drug resistance, ongoing scientific research has led to the eventual development of bed aquiline as a targeted treatment for TB after extensive research efforts. However, access to new medicines such as bed aquiline, delamanid and pretomanid remains difficult and costly in Spain. Although these drugs have the potential to improve treatment outcomes, they are not readily available and are not part of the standard first-line treatment protocols for MDR-TB. Patients in nearby clinics subsequently regularly require to be alluded to specialized centers that can offer these shorter and more compelling treatment plans. These centers are prepared to address the complexities included in MDR-TB treatment and offer the most recent treatment choices to guarantee patients have get to the most progressed care accessible. This situation highlights the pressing require to progress get to these vital solutions and the significance of growing their accessibility to progress TB care.

DISCUSSION

The World Health Organization (WHO) states that around 7% of unused TB cases are backslide. The primary calculate contributing to these backslides is frequently destitute adherence to the endorsed treatment arrange. This issue is so noteworthy that the WHO suggests specifically watched treatment (Speck), a way to screen whether patients are taking their medicine, particularly those with a history of destitute treatment adherence. The likelihood

of completing treatment with DOT rises to nearly 90%, thereby reducing the risk of recurrence. Recurrences are more commonly linked to treatment resistance, and individuals experiencing recurrent infections tend to have a poorer prognosis [12].

For Latent Tuberculosis Infection (LTBI), Spanish scientific societies have reached a consensus recommending a 3-months treatment regimen of rifampicin and isoniazid as the preferred option over a 6-month course of isoniazid alone. Later ponders moreover bolster the joining of rifapentine, which has a long half-life and can be utilized in week by week prophylactic regimens or every day dosing to increment medicate concentrations and move forward sterilizing viability [13]. This approach may possibly abbreviate the term of prophylactic treatment to as small as one month when isoniazid is utilized in combination with rifapentine. Nevertheless, rifapentine is not currently available in Europe or Spain, as it has not yet been approved by the European and Spanish drug authorities.

The Bacillus Calmette Guerin (BCG) vaccine has historically been the most widely administered worldwide, with an estimated uptake rate of approximately 90% and an efficacy of 60%–80% against the severe disseminated diseases meningeal and miliary tuberculosis.

Currently, modern tuberculosis antibodies are in different stages of clinical improvement and five antibody procedures are experiencing stage 3 trials to assess their viability. If these candidates illustrate superior assurance than BCG, a unused era of tuberculosis immunizations seem be accessible inside a few a long time.

CONCLUSION

Contrary to the factors that determine the persistence of TB and its resistance, science has made important advances in the field of diagnosis, treatment and prevention. Improved diagnostics, shorter treatment regimens for tuberculosis and the potential availability of an effective new vaccine targeting respiratory forms of the disease could bring us closer to realizing the goal of eradicating tuberculosis.

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