

WHO consultation on the translation of tuberculosis research into global policy guidelines

2-4 March 2021

Meeting Report



**World Health
Organization**

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Abbreviations and acronyms

DST	Drug susceptibility testing
DS-TB	Drug-susceptible tuberculosis
DR-TB	drug-resistant tuberculosis
DR-TB IPD	Global individual patient data platform for DR-TB treatment
IPC	Infection prevention control
NTP	National Tuberculosis Programme
PLHIV	People living with HIV
PMTPT	Programmatic management of TB preventive therapy
R&D	Research and development
TB	Tuberculosis
TPT	TB preventive therapy

Background

The Global Tuberculosis Programme of the World Health Organization (WHO/MTB) has the mandate to develop and disseminate evidence-based policy for tuberculosis (TB) prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care. Regular review of evidence, and assessment of country needs for policy across the cascade of care is part of its core function. In this regard, MTB organized a consultation assembling scientists, public health experts, partners, civil society and countries to exchange views on emerging areas of need for global TB policy guidance to achieve the goals and targets of the WHO End TB Strategy.

The specific objectives of this consultation were:

- I. to exchange views on emerging needs of Member States for policy guidance in TB prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care;
- II. to discuss critical evidence gaps related to emerging global TB policy development needs; and,
- III. to identify topical strategies best positioned to enhance the implementation and evaluation of global TB policy guidance.

The expected outcome of this meeting is a report (herewith) summarizing current thinking and suggested actions aligned to these objectives.

Introduction

After a welcome by Tereza Kasaeva and Matteo Zingol, Gerry Davies, Chair of the first day of the consultation, opened the meeting at 13:10 on March 2, 2021. The Chair presented the programme of the meeting and the participants (Annexes 1 and 2).

Session 1: WHO TB policy guidance: current status, update plans and evidence gaps

1.1 WHO TB policy guidance: current status, update plans and evidence gaps: Prevention

Avinash Kanchar, Global TB Programme, WHO

Avinash Kanchar presented the evolution of WHO policy guidance in the programmatic management of TB preventive therapy (PMTPT) over the past decade, as well as the scope of the current guideline and operational handbook. Global progress in the provision of TB Preventive Therapy (TPT) in 2018 and 2019 compared with cumulative target set for 2018-2022 in the UNHLM Political Declaration on TB was presented, and current challenges in meeting these targets were elaborated. Emerging policy needs for testing and treating TB infection, and in implementation of current approaches were discussed in the context of available evidence. Lastly, planned updates (2021/2022) to infection prevention control (IPC) handbook, TPT guidelines and other supportive tools such as the *Prevent TB* mobile application (version 3 with TB screening) were shared.

The Chair opened the floor for discussion framed around (but not limited to) the following two questions:

1. What is the opinion of the group on the way forward in the short and medium term in regards planned policy review/development for PMTPT and TB IPC?
2. What adjustments may be needed or new areas covered, in global policy development considering any other evidence and/or specific country needs to scaleup PMTPT and TB IPC?

Discussion:

- For people living with HIV (PLHIV), updating TB policy recommendations on co-administration of antiretroviral therapy and short course TPT remains important for 2021 and 2022. Considering that drug to drug interaction between antiretrovirals and TPT remains a barrier in accelerating implementation of new treatment options, early engagement and dialogue with antiretroviral developers is needed to reduce the lag time between ARV approval and availability of safety and pharmacokinetics data, for example, by incorporating TB considerations

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