

Tuberculosis: The Effect of Limited Screening Program on the Epidemiology of TB

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Objective: To study the epidemiology of tuberculosis (TB) in Bahrain and identify the risk factors for transmission and potential target interventions.

Design: Retrospective analysis of registered cases of tuberculosis in Bahrain.

Setting: Salmaniya Medical Complex, Bahrain.

Method: Review of registered patients with TB from 2004 to 2008, details and epidemiological data of the patients were retrieved from the records.

Result: One thousand three hundred ninety-five patients were registered with TB diagnosis. The average incidence was 32.3/100,000 population. Disease incidence decreased during the study period and that was more prominent with extrapulmonary TB (EPTB). The most common site of extrapulmonary involvement was lymph nodes.

The overall male-to-female ratio of TB cases was 1.7; it is higher (2.1) for pulmonary TB (PTB) but lower (1.3) for EPTB patients.

Non-Bahrainis were the majority of TB patients, 1056 (75.7%). TB among Non-Bahrainis is high in the age group of 20-29 and almost zero at the two extreme ages. Non-Bahrainis peak incidence of both PTB and EPTB is in the age group of 20-29 years, while among Bahrainis PTB peaked in the 40-49 years age group, but EPTB showed an increase in the incidence in the age group 20-49 years.

Conclusion: The majority of TB patients in the Kingdom of Bahrain are expatriates, which is possibly related to the limitation of screening program to chest radiography for male laborers. The control of TB among expatriates can be improved by implementation of PPD to all expatriate workers upon entry to the Kingdom.

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