Situational analysis of tuberculosis control programs in the Eastern Mediterranean Region: Gaps and solutions

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ABSTRACT

Objective/Background: The objectives of this study were to highlight the key challenges and the strategic directions to scale-up tuberculosis (TB) care in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR); to review TB burden in EMR, and evaluate the progress toward Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) targets by 2015; to identify the main obstacles for optimal TB care toward TB elimination; and to provide strategic directions to address the key challenges. The Eastern Mediterranean Region is composed of 22 countries with 648 million populations. The region has estimated TB incidence of 116 per 100,000. The estimated number of incident TB cases in 2015 was 749000 TB case.

Methods: The paper is based on the Annual World Health Organization Global TB report on implementation of TB control strategy.

Results: The EMR is a middle TB- and MDR-TB-burden region with 22 countries. As for MDGs, the region was able to meet the mortality target and revert TB incidence but could not achieve the prevalence target. The main challenges are limited infrastructure, human capacity, funds, use of new diagnostics tools and new medicines, and involvement of all stakeholders and community in TB care and control in addition to complex emergencies.

Conclusion: The year 2015 marks a transition from the MDGs to the Sustainable Development Goals and from the Stop TB Strategy to the End TB Strategy. The region will move into three main directions: complete pending tasks, mitigate the impact of the complex emergencies on TB control, and move toward TB elimination.

Conflicts of interest

The author has no conflicts of interest to declare.

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