

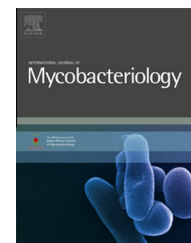
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Tuberculosis in Qatar

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ABSTRACT

Tuberculosis (TB) remains a common health problem in the State of Qatar. Qatar has a population of around 2.2 million; about 25% are Qatari Nationals. Most of the population reside in the capital Doha. The incidence rate of TB was 41/100,000 in 2012. 90% of the patients are non-Qataris. Most of the TB patients are among male laborers from Asian high TB endemic areas. The size of the labor force in Qatar increased by fourfold during the last decade.

Qatar has one National TB Reference Laboratory, which covers all country sectors, public (primary health centers and all public hospitals) and private hospitals and clinics. Qatar has a highly effective National TB Control Program.

The Qatar National TB Reference Laboratory does a full range of laboratory diagnosis, microscopy, culture (GMIT 960 and LJ media), identification by immuno-chromogenic (BD MGIT Tbc identification test) and molecular methods (Xpert MTB/RIF and Hain System). First-line drug susceptibility testing is done for all MTBC positive patients and repeated after 6 months if the results are still culture positive. Second-line drug susceptibility test for MDR is done at the Mayo Clinic Reference Laboratory. The lab receives an average of 70 samples daily, the majority for culture. Xpert MTB/RIF is performed on all extra-pulmonary samples directly and is also performed on at least one sample for all TB patients to speed up the identification and Rifampicin susceptibility testing. Smear positivity rate ranges from 50% to 80%. In the near future, molecular typing will be performed on all MTBC isolates from the patients.

Hamad Medical Corporation is CAP accredited, and the lab is also CAP accredited. External quality assurance covers microscopy, culture and drug susceptibility testing. All TB care, including care for MDR-TB and latent TB infection, are available free of charge for Qatari and non-Qatari residents.

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