

HIV/AIDS linked to drug resistant TB

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U.S. scientists say a highly drug-resistant form of tuberculosis has been linked to HIV/AIDS in a study conducted in rural South Africa.

Yale School of Medicine researchers aiming to integrate HIV and TB care and treatment note TB is the most common cause of death and illness in those with HIV infection in sub-Saharan Africa. Death rates of up to 40 percent annually have been reported in patients with both HIV and TB.

Senior author Dr. Gerald Friedland, director of the AIDS program at Yale, said the issue is of grave worldwide importance, with multi-drug resistant tuberculosis and extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis threatening to blunt or reverse the success of TB programs and the roll-out of anti-retroviral HIV therapies in resource limited settings.

Friedland says there is a desperate need for new TB diagnostic tests and treatments.

"It is still being diagnosed the same way it was in 1882," he said. "Modern technology for diagnosis and new treatment needs to be developed urgently. The last approved TB drug was 40 years ago."

The 5-year study appeared in the Oct. 26 issue of The Lancet.

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