

Conflict noted between African scientists

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A conflict between scientists working with the human immunodeficiency virus and those working with tuberculosis is being reported in Africa.

The controversy stems from the fact TB is the leading cause of death among those infected with HIV and, in some African countries, about 60 percent of those with TB are also HIV-positive.

Although there are serious drug interactions between HIV and TB medicines, physicians are also finding a deadly new syndrome called IRIS, which results when those with TB are put on HIV medicines.

Yet, observers note, the two communities continue to work separately, diagnosing and treating one disease without taking the other into account. Adding to the problem is the fact TB researchers receive less than 10 percent of the funding given to HIV-AIDS scientists annually.

And since existing drugs and vaccines for tuberculosis were developed decades ago, the TB infrastructure needs to be updated. But without needed funding, researchers are struggling to find new drugs and vaccines.

The controversy is detailed in a special report appearing in this month's issue of the New York-published journal Nature Medicine.

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