

Culture-based screening algorithm cuts TB in immigrants

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(HealthDay)—Implementation of a culture-based screening algorithm in 2007 reduced the incidence of tuberculosis (TB) among immigrants and refugees bound for the United States, according to a study published in the March 17 issue of the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

Yecai Liu, from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, and colleagues examined the effect of the culture-based algorithm, implemented in 2007, for preventing the importation of TB to the United States by [immigrants](#) and refugees from foreign countries.

The researchers found that 51.4 percent of the 3,212,421 arrivals of immigrants and refugees from 2007 to 2012 were screened by the smear-based algorithm and 48.6 percent were screened by the culture-based algorithm. More than half (54.4 percent) of the 4,032 TB cases diagnosed by the culture-based algorithm were smear-negative/culture-

positive. The annual number of reported cases among foreign-born persons within one year of arrival was relatively constant before implementation (2002 to 2006; mean, 1,504 cases), and decreased during implementation (from 1,511 to 940 in 2007 to 2012). During the same period, there was an increase in the annual number of smear-negative/culture-positive TB cases diagnosed overseas among immigrants and [refugees](#) bound for the United States, from four to 629.

"Implementation of the culture-based algorithm may have substantially reduced the incidence of TB among newly arrived, foreign-born persons in the United States," the authors write.

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