

Report: U.S. falling short on TB battle

3 February 2008

A new report said the United States is falling short of its benchmark goal of eliminating tuberculosis as a public health problem by 2010.

Data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows latent TB infection in the U.S. population from 1999-2000 was 4.2 percent. The current infection rate would have to be 1 percent and decreasing to be on course to reach its goal of TB incidence of less than one per million by 2010, researchers said.

"Persons with LTBI are not infectious and cannot transmit TB to others, and only 5-10 percent of individuals with LTBI will go on to develop active TB, which is infectious. But because the risk of progression to TB can be substantially reduced by preventive treatment, it is crucial that LTBI be detected and treated," lead author Dr. Diane Bennett of the CDC said Friday in a release.

The results for a National Health and Nutritional Examination Survey suggest that of the 11,213,000 with LTBI in the overall U.S. population, only one in four had been diagnosed, the report said..

The findings were published in the American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine.

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APA citation: Report: U.S. falling short on TB battle (2008, February 3) retrieved 24 January 2022 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2008-02-falling-short-tb.html>

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