Medical Xpress

TB infection rates set to 'turn clock back to 1930s'

February 11 2013

During the 1930s, dedicated sanitaria and invasive surgery were commonly prescribed for those with the infection - usually caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, which the editors describe as "the most successful human pathogen of all time."

TB often lies dormant with no symptoms, but in a proportion of cases, becomes active, predominantly attacking the lungs. But it can also affect the bones and nervous system, and if left untreated can be fatal.

The infection is developing increasing resistance around the world to the powerful drugs currently used to treat it.

"Whatever we may have once optimistically thought, TB remains with death, taxes and political chicanery as being inevitable, unavoidable and deeply unpleasant," write the joint editors, Andy Bush and Ian Pavord.

"It shows every sign of weathering the storm and superb randomised controlled trials, to emerge in ever-increasingly drug-resistant forms, potentially turning the clock back to the 1930s," they say.

"This edition of *Thorax*, coinciding with world TB day, is themed to recognise the ongoing sinister successes of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, unarguably the most successful human pathogen of all time," they conclude.

The issue contains international research papers, looking at a broad range

of issues, from the risk of TB after seroconversion to HIV infection, to the impact of ethnicity on the pattern of disease.

Provided by British Medical Journal

Citation: TB infection rates set to 'turn clock back to 1930s' (2013, February 11) retrieved 24 April 2024 from https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-02-tb-infection-clock-1930s.html

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