

Report: S. Africa should isolate TB strain

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South African researchers recommended the country force patients suffering from a highly drug-resistant strain of tuberculosis into isolation.

Researchers at the Center for the AIDS Program of Research in Durban said the extreme drug resistant tuberculosis, or XDR-TB, needs to be contained to prevent it from spreading on the AIDS-stricken continent, The Independent Online reported Tuesday.

"XDR-TB represents a major threat to public health. If the only way to manage it is to forcibly confine, then it needs to be done," said Jerome Singh, study co-author and a lawyer at the center.

"Ultimately in such crises, the interests of public health must prevail over the rights of the individual."

The strain has claimed 74 lives in South Africa in recent months. Most of the deceased had tested positive for HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

About 5.5 million of South Africa's 45 million citizens are thought to be infected with HIV.

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