

Current Health Event

Tuberculosis

Tuberculosis (TB) is one of the top 10 causes of death worldwide and a leading killer of people with HIV. In 2017, global estimates showed that 10 million people fell ill with the disease, and 1.6 million died from it (including 0.3 million among HIV positive people). TB can be treated; an estimated 54 million lives were saved between 2000 and 2017.

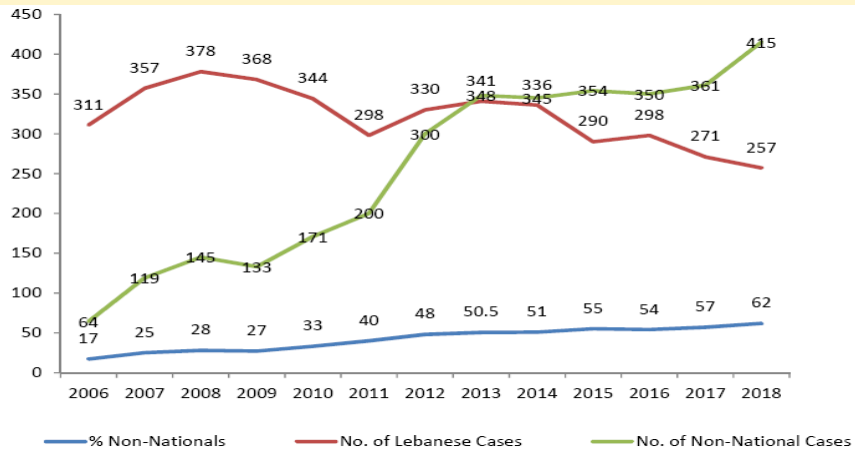
Editorial note:

TB is caused by Mycobacterium tuberculosis, a bacterium that mainly infects the lungs. It spreads from one person to another through airborne particles. Poor living conditions, overcrowding, and malnutrition increase the risk of TB infection. TB is treated with a 6- to 9-month drug regimen where antibiotics are used. Some strains of the bacterium developed antimicrobial resistance; Multi Drug Resistant (MDR) TB is TB that does not respond to at least Isoniazid and Rifampin, the two main TB drugs. MDR TB cases are becoming increasingly difficult to treat in some countries.

The severity of national epidemics varies widely. Based on the WHO Global TB Report; in 2017, there were under 10 new cases per 100 000 population in most high-income countries, 150–400 in most of the 30 high TB burden countries, and above 500 in a few countries. Lebanon is a low Tuberculosis (TB) burden country having in 2017 an estimated incidence rate of 12/100000 population and an estimated mortality rate of 0.95/100000 population.

Although the number of notified Lebanese TB cases has been relatively stable over the past 8 years, notified TB cases among non-nationals, mainly Syrians and migrant workers, has been gradually increasing (Figure 1). In fact, the proportion of non-nationals reached 62% of the total TB

Figure 1: Trends in notified TB cases-Nationals/ Non-nationals, 2006-2018 (Source: NTP Annual report– 2018)



cases in 2018. In regards to geographical distribution of TB patients, 55% of all the notified cases and 79% of non-national TB cases, lived in Beirut and Mount Lebanon. The National Tuberculosis Programme (NTP) in Lebanon follows the Directly Observed Treatment Short-course strategy (DOTS), which is the internationally recommended TB control strategy. Video Observed Treatment (VOT) and reminder messages (through WhatsApp) are also being used by the NTP.

In 2017, the detection rate in Lebanon was 87% and the overall treatment success rate was 84.5%. The NTP reported a high treatment success rate among Lebanese and Syrians (94.1% and 91% respectively). A low treatment success rate was reported among patients from the migrant workforce (67.3%); this could be attributed to the fact that many of them leave the country before completion of treatment. Moreover, in 2018, 5 MDR cases were reported by the NTP; 2 were Lebanese, and 3 non-Lebanese.

WHO supported the MOPH in 2018 in the automation of the treatment of latent TB cases, based on the recently issued protocols. This is considered a success story that resulted in decentralization of screening and care, and proper referral and follow up of latent TB cases.

WHO End TB Strategy

Vision:

A world free of TB. Zero deaths, disease and suffering due to TB.

Indicators:

- .95% reduction by 2035 in number of TB deaths compared with 2015.
- .90% reduction by 2035 in TB incidence rate compared with 2015.
- .Zero TB-affected families facing catastrophic costs due to TB by 2035.

Notifiable Diseases in Lebanon
[Cumulative n° of cases among all Residents (among Syrians)]
as of 31 March 2019

Disease	2018	2019	Feb 19	Mar 19
Vaccine Preventable Diseases				
Polio	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
AFP	88 (33)	24 (4)	7 (1)	7 (1)
Measles	952 (156)	420 (17)	140 (7)	130 (7)
Mumps	121 (41)	29 (7)	8 (3)	11 (3)
Pertussis	64 (26)	16 (7)	2 (1)	7 (3)
Rabies	3 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Rubella	11 (4)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Tetanus	2 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Viral Hep. B	253 (28)	54 (9)	14 (4)	18 (2)
Water/Food Borne Diseases				
Brucellosis	242 (26)	27 (3)	12 (3)	7 (0)
Cholera	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Hydatid cyst	8 (2)	6 (1)	3 (0)	3 (1)
Typhoid fever	237 (4)	49 (1)	15 (1)	12 (0)
Viral Hep. A	899 (152)	115 (37)	30 (17)	19 (5)
Other Diseases				
Meningitis	420 (82)	85 (20)	19 (1)	38 (13)
Viral Hep. C	103 (7)	20 (3)	4 (0)	6 (1)