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## Curable tuberculosis remains among top 10 deadly disease

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Going by the defiance of the ancient [disease](#) despite advancements in medical science, the bacteria may persist in several Indians even beyond 2025 -- the deadline set by [Prime Minister Narendra Modi](#) to eradicate [tuberculosis](#) from the country.

Day before the World [Tuberculosis](#) Day on March 24, the [Prime Minister](#) set the deadline to eradicate the epidemic from India, which accounts for 25 per cent of the global [tuberculosis](#) cases. This is five years ahead of the 2030 deadline set by other countries.

"Globally, [TB](#) incidence is falling at about 2 per cent per year. This needs to accelerate to a 4-5 per cent annual decline to reach the 2020 milestones of the 'End [TB](#) Strategy'. Ending the [TB](#) epidemic by 2030 is among the [health](#) targets of the Sustainable Development Goals," said World [Health](#) Organization (WHO) on its website.

[TB](#) is one of the top 10 causes of death worldwide. In 2016, 10.4 million people fell ill with [TB](#) and 1.7 million died. Over 95 per cent of [TB](#) deaths occur in low-income and middle-income countries. Seven countries account for 64 per cent of the total, with [India](#) leading the count, as per WHO.

While the [Indian government](#) has given itself an ambitious target and taken several steps to reach it, including jail terms for doctors, hospitals and chemists if they fail to report [TB](#) cases, the country is facing the threat of rise in multi-drug resistant [tuberculosis](#) (MDR-TB).

Though the number of new cases has been falling for some years, multidrug-resistant [TB](#) (MDR-TB) remains a public [health](#) crisis and a [health](#) security threat.

"[India](#) accounts for about a quarter of the global [TB](#) burden. Worldwide [India](#) is the country with the highest burden of both [TB](#) and MDR [TB](#). Over the period of years, it is observed that not all [tuberculosis](#) cases are new patients. Significant patients present to us with recurrence or relapse of tubercular

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However, [tuberculosis](#) is curable and preventable. "The treatment is a lengthy one but most patients who take medications in a proper way can beat the [disease](#) effectively," said Dr Puneet Khanna, Senior [Consultant](#) & Head, Respiratory [Medicine](#) Intervention Pulmonology and Sleep Medicine, [Aakash Healthcare Super Speciality Hospital](#).

The [disease](#) spreads through air and the symptoms include cough, fever, weight loss, chest pain, and [fatigue](#).

"Early diagnosis can cure [TB](#) completely. The complete course of [TB](#) treatment is minimum 6 months. In certain cases, patients do not respond to the commonly used [TB](#) treatment. There is an increase in MDR [TB](#) patients in last few years. Prevalence of MDR [TB](#) is almost 4-7 per cent," said Dr Salil Bendre, Chest Physician, [Nanavati Super Speciality Hospital](#).

[Tuberculosis](#) is one of the oldest and serious illnesses known to mankind, which, despite advances in [medicine](#) and vaccination, continues to cause high mortality.

"We are already seeing a rise in the number of Multi-Drug Resistant (MDR) and Extremely Drug Resistant (XDR)-[tuberculosis](#). Such cases are extremely difficult to treat and are a major cause of mortality," said Dr Pradeep Mahajan, Regenerative [Medicine](#) Researcher, StemRx Bioscience Solutions Pvt Ltd.

"The need of the hour is newer treatment modalities that target the [disease](#) from an unconventional angle. Cell-based therapy/ [immunotherapy](#) is one such modality wherein cells from ones' own body may be used to treat TB," said Mahajan.

Dr Animesh Arya, [Sr Consultant](#) in Respiratory Medicine, [Sri Balaji Action Medical Institute](#) said, "It is advisable to maintain a good immunity and avoid coming into contact with people having [tuberculosis](#). Few basic hygiene practices should be adopted like covering their mouth while coughing, refrain from spitting in public areas and to follow proper medication regimen."

Further, as per Dr [Sweta Gupta](#) Clinical Director and [Sr Consultant](#) - Fertility Solutions, [Medicover](#) Fertility, [tuberculosis](#) causes tubal damage, resulting in rigid, pipe-like tubes which further impairs transport of egg from the ovary. When endometrium is damaged due to TB, it may lead to recurrent implantation failure, miscarriage, and recurrent pregnancy loss.

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