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Geiter L, "Ending Neglect: The elimination of Tuberculosis in the United States", 1st ed., Washington DC: National Academy Press 2000.

2009 World TB Day

World TB Day, which is held on March 24th every year, commemorates the date in 1882 when Dr. Robert Koch announced his discovery of *M. tuberculosis*, the bacteria that causes tuberculosis. His discovery paved the way for diagnosing and curing tuberculosis.

The goal of this day is to build public awareness of tuberculosis. TB is a serious problem and still remains an epidemic in much of the world today. According to the World Health Organization¹:

- More than two billion people, or approximately one-third of the world's population, are infected with TB
- Every 20 seconds, someone in the world dies of TB
- 1 in 10 people infected with TB will become sick with active TB in their lifetime
- TB is contagious and spreads through the air. If not treated, each person with active TB disease infects on average 10 to 15 people each year
- TB is the leading infectious killer of people living with HIV/AIDS
- Multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) remains a threat with an estimated 490,000 new cases each year, causing more than 130,000 deaths

In the United States, 12,898 TB cases were reported in 2008². Ten to fifteen million people are infected with latent TB infection (LTBI).

- Since 2000, the pace of decline in the annual TB rate has slowed
- Seventeen states had higher rates of TB in 2008 compared to 2007
- A total of one hundred and twenty-five multidrug-resistant TB cases were reported in 2007

According to the Institute of Medicine, "***The ability to identify individuals who are truly infected with *M. tuberculosis* and who are at risk for disease will tremendously simplify the process of tuberculosis elimination in the United States. The search for more effective diagnostic methods has never been more important - particularly in the detection of latent TB.***"⁴

To learn about the T-SPOT.*TB* test, the new blood test for TB [click here](#).

¹World Health Organization 2008 Tuberculosis Facts

²CDC, MMWR, 2009; 58; 249.

³CDC, MMWR, 2005; 54; 5.

⁴Geiter L., "Ending Neglect: The elimination of Tuberculosis in the United States", 1st ed. Washington DC: National Academy Press



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