

Protecting Your Workforce from Tuberculosis

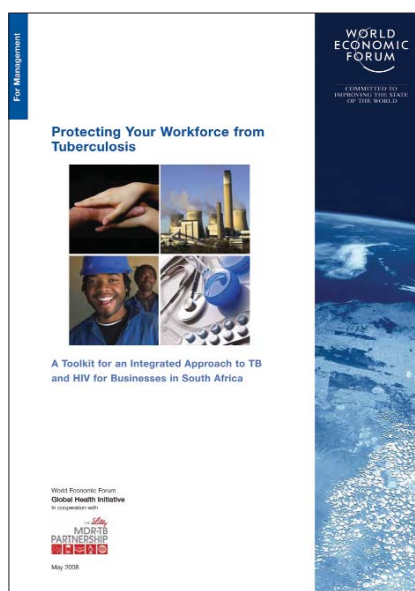
A Toolkit for an Integrated Approach to TB and HIV for Businesses in South Africa

The Global Health Initiative of the World Economic Forum, with support from the Lilly MDR-TB Partnership and inputs from key partners, has developed a toolkit especially designed to help South African companies plan and implement workplace and community-based TB control programmes. It encourages companies to adopt an integrated approach to manage TB and HIV co-infections.

incidence of multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) is relatively low in South Africa (less than 2% of new cases), which translates into a large absolute number of TB cases. Extremely (or extensively) drug-resistant tuberculosis (XDR-TB) has been recorded in all provinces in South Africa, with the largest number reported from KwaZulu-Natal. XDR-TB has also been reported from some mines. The South African Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS (SABCOHA) estimates that between 10-40% of workforces are likely to be HIV infected, resulting in lower productivity. TB rates in some South African businesses exceed 3,000 per 100,000 of the population (or 3%) per year.

Everyone is vulnerable to TB and HIV. For both diseases, deaths occur mostly among adults in their productive prime, between the ages of 15 and 54. Yet TB can be prevented, treated and cured, even in HIV/AIDS-infected persons.

Encouragingly, businesses in South Africa have begun implementing TB and HIV control activities in their workplaces and a few have extended their interventions beyond the workplace into the community. According to the World Economic Forum's report, *Tackling Tuberculosis: The Business Response* (<http://www.weforum.org/pdf/GHI/TB.pdf>), 85% of the region's companies responding to the Forum's Executive Opinion Survey expressed concern over the impact of TB on their businesses.



In 2006, South Africa was ranked ninth out of the 22 top TB high-burden countries and fourth in the Africa region. It has the greatest burden of HIV in the world. The increase in TB rates in Sub-Saharan Africa is driven largely by the HIV epidemic. Available information suggests that the

The toolkit aims to provide companies with guidance on how to design and implement integrated TB and HIV activities appropriate to their workplace and surrounding community, in partnership with their employees and the government.

The toolkit is meant for:

- Managers who aim to implement TB workplace interventions and integrate with HIV activities
- Occupational and healthcare professionals including physicians, nurses and allied health professionals
- Employees and employee representative bodies

The toolkit contains information regarding:

- Putting in place a TB workplace policy and determining its key elements
- Integrating TB and HIV activities
- Recognizing symptoms and diagnosing TB
- Ensuring regimens that should be followed for successful treatment
- Highlighting DOTs and implementing it in the workplace
- Defining and managing MDR-TB
- Engaging employees in TB care and making it an easy topic to deal with in the workplace

The toolkit contents include:

- An introduction to TB, the business case for managing TB/HIV and guiding principles to plan and implement relevant workplace and community based programmes
- A series of fact sheets for healthcare professionals on basic scientific information about TB and TB/HIV management and on planning workplace programmes
- A fact sheet, posters and leaflets for employers and employee education
- A fact sheet on TB and HIV-related stigma and discrimination, myths and challenges
- The contact information of national and provincial TB managers
- A list of references and useful links for further reading

Materials in the toolkit are aimed to help companies:

- Raise and maintain employee awareness of TB, its symptoms and the link to HIV
- Increase opportunities for better prevention, diagnosis and treatment of TB and HIV in the workplace
- Support TB patients and people living with HIV and/or TB
- Address stigma and discrimination
- Provide information on TB, TB/HIV, drug-resistant TB and related programme activities to human resource departments, healthcare professionals and other care and support staff
- Identify resource materials and partners to assist in implementing TB/HIV programmes

Key facts to remember:

TB

- TB is preventable and curable
- A person with TB needs care and support in order to complete months of TB treatment
- Treatment makes most people with TB non-infectious within approximately two weeks
- TB patients can return to work as soon as they feel well enough and are no longer infectious
- Workplace TB care is simple, low-cost and highly cost-effective
- Drug resistant TB can be prevented by ensuring that TB patients complete their treatment and are cured

HIV

- HIV is preventable and treatable
- People living with HIV have a greatly increased risk of developing TB
- TB is curable for people living with HIV
- It is possible and preferable to treat both HIV and TB together (TB treatment may be started even before antiretroviral therapy)
- It is possible to prevent TB in people living with HIV
- Integrating workplace TB and HIV prevention, treatment and care programmes ensures a healthy and productive workforce and a safe working environment

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This toolkit is not intended to provide specific technical details for management of TB or HIV.