

Indonesia Partners US To Fight Tuberculosis

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AsianScientist (Mar. 28, 2011) - Indonesia and the United States have signed a new partnership on the control of tuberculosis and prevention of drug resistance. The signing took place on March 24, one day before World Tuberculosis (TB) Day.

Tuberculosis remains a global health issue, with 9.4 million new cases and more than 1.7 million deaths recorded in 2009. Globally, Indonesia has the fifth highest TB rate.

With the TB problem a key component of President Obama's Global Health Initiative, the U.S. Government is providing more than \$4.3 billion to fight TB and Indonesia is one of the largest grantees.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) will support the National TB Program and the Indonesian government by prioritizing 11 high-risk provinces and districts.

There, they will increase diagnostic and laboratory capacity, manage drug supplies, improve access to quality care, and strengthen health systems.

"The only way to prevent tuberculosis is to ensure that those with active tuberculosis are promptly diagnosed, receive treatment as soon as possible and successfully complete the treatment," said Miles Toder, acting director of USAID to the Jakarta Post.

Patients who complete antibiotic treatment of six to nine months have a high survival rate. Without treatment, TB has a higher than 50 percent death rate.

Through USAID support, five laboratories in Indonesia are now capable of diagnosing multi-drug resistant (MDR) TB. In early 2010, no patients were receiving treatment, but by December, more than 130 were in treatment with steadily increasing numbers.

Indonesia is currently on track to meet the Millennium Development Goals of halving TB prevalence and mortality by 2015. Challenges remain, however, in treating the large vulnerable populations in under-served urban and remote areas.

Source: [USAID](#).

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