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INCREASING INCIDENCE OF TB-COVID CO-INFECTION. HIGHER HOSPITALIZATION AND DEATH RATES

A meta-analysis of 17 studies shows that **tuberculosis** (TB) and co-infection with COVID-19 are becoming increasingly widespread worldwide. The death rates from this co-infection are gradually decreasing but remain higher compared to individual **COVID-19 infection**.

The 17 studies were conducted in 38 countries and regions, covering both high-prevalence and low-prevalence TB areas. Sixteen studies were conducted at the state level, and the other included TB-COVID patients from 172 centers in 34 countries, members of the Global TB/COVID-19 Study Group.

Two studies estimated the prevalence of joint TB-COVID infection: one conducted in the Western Cape province, South Africa (prevalence of 0.06%), and one in California (prevalence of 0.02%).

In all studies, patients were treated with known TB medications: rifampicin, isoniazid, ethambutol, and pyrazinamide.

The authors did not find any papers that could provide specific guidelines on the best practices for managing TB-COVID co-infection.

Patients with co-infection have an increased risk of hospitalization, admission to **intensive care**, and death. The estimated mortality rate among hospitalized TB-COVID patients was 11.4% (confidence interval [CI] 95%, 5.6% to 18.8%). The overall mortality rate for co-infected patients was 7.1% (CI 95%, 4.0% to 10.8%).

The cumulative relative risk of in-hospital death was 0.8 (CI 95%, 0.18 to 3.68) for TB-COVID patients, higher than for COVID-19 patients.

Individuals with TB-COVID co-infection are at an increased risk of hospitalization, prolonged **recovery** periods, and accelerated mortality compared to individual COVID-19.

The way in which the pathophysiology of inflammation in COVID affects other infections should be evaluate for the development of therapeutic strategies that reduce the potentially fatal impact of certain co-infections or associations with other chronic conditions.

Adapted after Stephanie Soucheray, 14 May 2024

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