

EXTENSIVELY DRUG-RESISTANT TUBERCULOSIS: A NEW NAME FOR AN OLD PROBLEM

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Extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis (XDR-TB) has been considered an emerging disease by the Public Health Authorities. The purpose of the study was to identify the XDR strains causing outbreaks among the multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB). A MDR-TB *Mycobacterium bovis* named B strain caused nosocomial outbreaks in different hospitals in the 1990s, at the peak of HIV epidemic in Spain and when antiretroviral therapy was not available.

Methods: Since 1998, more than four hundred MDR strains isolated in the different laboratories participant in the Spanish Network of MDR tuberculosis had been genotyped and some minimal data had been collected, including the available results of susceptibility to drugs.

Results: The B strain previously described as MDR-TB responsible for this outbreak fits the XDR-TB case definition. It was highly transmitted by respiratory route and with a high mortality, including at least 114 cases to 2003. No effective medical treatment was available. Following this XDR-TB outbreak, a national surveillance network for MDR-TB was set up in Spain in 1998. Between 1998 and 2003, we detected 22 new cases. However, no new cases of XDR-TB "B" strain infection have been reported since in our national MDR-TB database. Only one more cluster of XDR-TB has been detected including 3 patients.

Conclusion: We should consider extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis as a new name for an old problem when coinfection with MDR-TB and HIV infected patients without antiretroviral treatment is high. Our experience indicates that only the use of effective treatments for HIV infection together with the implementation of severe control measures could stop XDR-TB outbreaks. The development of new drugs and effective vaccines against TB, are needed to bring XDR-TB outbreaks under control in developed countries.