

THE NEW THREAT OF EXTENSIVELY DRUG RESISTANT TUBERCULOSIS (XDR TB)

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Aim: We evaluated the presence of the Extensively Drug Resistant *M. tuberculosis* (MTB) strains in TB patients diagnosed at the National Reference Laboratory for Mycobacteria in Athens in the period between January 2004 and August 2006.

Material: 1415 new TB patients resulting in an equal number of MTB isolations.

Methods: Microscopy, culture by the classical method on solid Löwenstein-Jensen (LJ) medium, and by the automated system Bactec MGIT 960 (Becton Dickinson), identification by hybridization methods and commercial kits: Innolipa V₂ (Innogenetics), Accuprobe (Gen Probe, Biomerieux) and Genotype Mycobacterium CM and AS (Hain Life, Science) and sensitivity testing by the method of proportion on LJ solid medium, by Bactec MGIT 960 (Becton Dickinson) and by hybridization technique, Geno Type MTBDR, (Hain Life Science).

Results: 1415 strains were isolated. 40/1415 (2,8%) were Multi Drug Resistant (MDR) and 9/1415 (0,6%) were XDR. The percentage of MDR which were XDR was 22,5% (9/40 MTB isolates). Regarding XDR TB patients' nationality, 3/9 patients (33,3%) were from NE European countries and 6/9 (66,7%) were native Greeks.

Conclusions: The isolation of XDR MTB strains in TB patients in our country, should be an alert for public health authorities since Greece is a common destination for immigrants with further plan to move in Europe.