



CHILDREN WITH TB: *Neglect Them No Longer*

NEW PEDIATRIC TB TREATMENTS ARE URGENTLY NEEDED

Tuberculosis (TB) is a neglected disease, killing nearly 1.4 million each year in part due to the inadequacy of the tools available to tackle this global pandemic. But perhaps no group of TB patients is more neglected than the estimated half a million children or more who suffer from the disease each year. Today, there are no appropriate TB medicines for children, hindering effective treatment and fueling the development of drug-resistance. Creating child-friendly formulations and speeding the development of new childhood TB treatments is a moral and global health imperative.

A FAMILY DISEASE, A FORMIDABLE BURDEN

TB is among the top 10 causes of illness and death among children. TB is commonly passed from adults to children within the same family and household. Current estimates indicate 500,000 new cases each year and more than 64,000 deaths. However, many children with TB go undiagnosed, so experts suspect the number of children suffering from TB is even larger. In some particularly hard-hit countries, children represent 20-40% of the TB caseload.

APPROPRIATE TREATMENTS URGENTLY NEEDED

No pediatric TB treatments currently exist in the correct formulation and dosage. In 2010, the World Health Organization released revised guidelines for pediatric TB drug doses, however no such treatments have reached the marketplace. Currently, those treating children with TB must grind up or cut adult treatments to approximate an appropriate dose for a child. This leads to improper or incomplete treatment, institutionalizing poor health outcomes and the development of drug resistance.

REPAIRING THE MARKET

The need for pediatrics TB drug has been ignored for far too long, resulting in a complete lack of appropriate medicines. Clear information on the TB burden and regulatory processes can help catalyze manufacturers and others to invest in the field of pediatric TB drugs.

CLOSING THE GAP FOR TOMORROW'S TREATMENTS

It is critical to reduce the time between the introduction of new TB drugs in the pipeline and the corresponding pediatric formulations. We can't allow the current reality—where childhood formulations come to market decades after adult therapies—to be perpetuated.

TIME FOR ACTION IS NOW

The neglect of children with TB must end today. Appropriate treatment for children with TB simply does not currently exist. Increased focus and attention on the unique treatment needs of children with TB is a moral and practical imperative. Only by embracing a comprehensive approach that includes the development of new tools can we protect the world's children from this enduring pandemic.