

Sustaining TB care during the COVID-19 pandemic

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

EPW core priorities and flagships

Moving towards universal health coverage
Promoting health and well-being

WHO collaboration

Technical guidance
WHO collaborating centre

The COVID-19 pandemic strained the Russian Federation's national health system and forced the diversion of resources to combat the virus. This created obstacles in maintaining routine health services such as TB testing, which are crucial to prevent a surge in undiagnosed and untreated cases.

The WHO Collaborating Centre for Research in TB and HIV, located at the National Medical Research Centre of Phthisiopulmonology and Infectious Diseases, provided essential technical support through video conferences, webinars and workshops that enabled health authorities to adapt TB services to the constraints imposed by the pandemic. This included implementing comprehensive TB screening guidelines aligned with WHO recommendations, enabling TB facilities to continue operations even as some were repurposed to treat COVID-19 patients.

The impact

By 2022, TB testing rates surpassed pre-pandemic levels, reaching 76% of the population. This comprehensive coverage included high-risk groups and the general population, and was facilitated by mandatory screening for children in schools and daycare centres. Remote monitoring with video technology ensured patients continued their treatment and received follow-up care, maximizing their chances of a full recovery.

Lessons learned

- The establishment of the WHO Collaborating Centre for Research in TB and HIV improved the skills of health-care workers in the country and around the world.
- Developing clear guidelines that align with WHO recommendations is crucial for adapting health services during crises.
- Implementing remote monitoring technologies ensures continuous patient care when face-to-face interactions are limited.

Donors and partners

National Medical Research Centre of Phthisiopulmonology and Infectious Diseases; Ministry of Health; regional health authorities; Russian Society of Phthisiologists; WHO Collaborating Centre for Research in TB and HIV



A doctor and patient discuss TB test results at the National Medical Research Centre of Phthisiopulmonology and Infectious Diseases in Moscow. © WHO/Anton Chuprinin

“During the pandemic, it was vital for us to detect both TB and COVID-19 cases. The support we received from partners was crucial to achieve this.”

Dr Irina Vasilyeva, Chief TB Specialist at the Ministry of Health, Russian Federation

What's next?

The Russian Federation plans to further integrate data systems for TB and other infectious diseases to enhance monitoring and response capabilities. Continued use of telemedicine will support remote areas, ensuring timely and effective care. The lessons learned will guide future responses to health crises, with ongoing training for health-care workers to strengthen outbreak management.

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