

NOTICE TO READERS: The Bulletin of the World Health Organization was created by WHO as a forum for public health experts to publish their findings, express their views and engage a wider audience on critical public health issues of the day. Consequently, *the views expressed by the writers in these pages do not necessarily represent the views of WHO.*

Diabetics at higher risk of tuberculosis infection

Geneva - May 2011- People with diabetes face a much higher risk of contracting tuberculosis (TB) than non-diabetics, according to results of a study published in the May issue of the *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*.

The study, done in medically-underserved communities on both sides of the border of Mexico and the United States of America (USA), found that people with diabetes face three to five times the risk of contracting TB than non-diabetics living in the same settings.

Although the link between diabetes (primarily type 1) and TB has been known since the beginning of the 20th century, it had largely been forgotten by the 1950s as diabetes could be controlled by insulin and drugs to treat TB became available.

“With the massive increase in diabetes in TB-endemic areas, our findings highlight the emerging impact of type 2 diabetes on TB control in regions of the world where both diseases are prevalent,” says co-author Blanca I Restrepo, from the University of Texas, USA.

“Many countries are missing opportunities to prevent TB in diabetes patients. People with diabetes who have had recent contact with a TB patient are prime candidates for preventive treatment.” The researchers also recommend screening TB contacts for diabetes to improve detection and management of both diseases.

This study has implications in particular for countries with high prevalence of both diseases, such as Bangladesh, Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan and the Russian Federation.

Read the paper here: <http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/89/5/10-085738.pdf>

The *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* is one of the world's leading public health journals. It is the flagship periodical of WHO, with a special focus on developing countries. Articles are peer-reviewed and are independent of WHO guidelines. Abstracts are now available in the six official languages of the United Nations.

Further items in this month's issue include:

- Psychiatrist Mustafa Elmasri challenges the way the international community handles mental health care in crises
- Opt-out HIV testing dramatically increases cases diagnosed in Zambia
- A case for no-fault compensation for vaccine injuries
- One third of patients in Thailand are "medical tourists": effects on the health system
- Road crashes double over four years in Kyrgyzstan

The May issue table of contents can be found at:

<http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/89/5/en/index.html>

The complete contents of the *Bulletin*, since 1948, is available free to all readers worldwide through PubMed Central, available at:

<http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/tocrender.fcgi?journal=522&action=archive>

For further information please contact:

Sarah Cumberland

Bulletin of the World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland.

Office: +41 22 791 2570, mobile: +41 79 206 1403

e-mail: cumberlands@who.int

Blanca I Restrepo, Associate Professor, Division of Epidemiology

University of Texas Health Science Center, Houston, Texas, United States of America

Office: +1 956 882 5172, mobile: +1 956 279 3841

e-mail: Blanca.I.Restrepo@uth.tmc.edu

To speak to a diabetes expert:

Paul Garwood, Communications officer, Noncommunicable diseases and mental health, World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland.

Mobile: +41 79 475 5546

e-mail: garwoodp@who.int

To speak to a tuberculosis expert:

Glenn Thomas, Communications officer, Stop TB, World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland.

Office: +41 22 791 3983, e-mail: thomasg@who.int