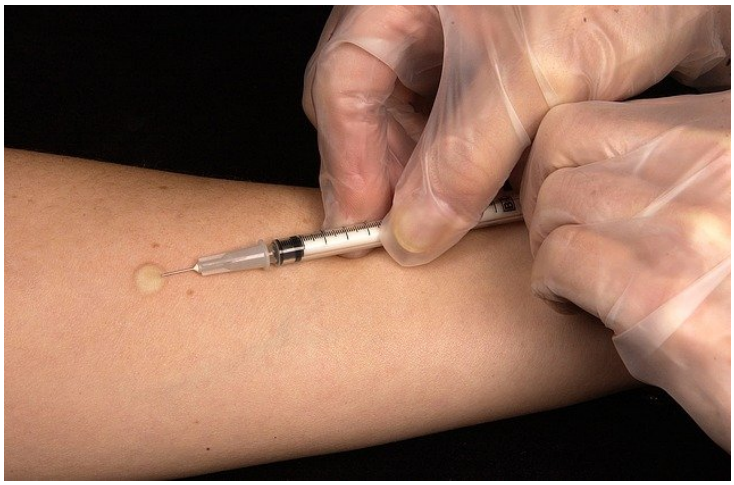
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WHO aims to eliminate TB by 2050

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Singapore: WHO along with European Respiratory Society (ERS), has outlined a framework to work on pre-elimination of tuberculosis (TB) in countries with low levels of the disease and target to have fewer than 10 new TB cases per million people per year by 2035.

WHO's goal is to achieve full elimination of TB by 2050, defined as less than 1 case per million people per year. Although TB is preventable and curable, millions are infected and at risk of falling ill.

The proposed framework is developed with experts from low-burden countries and adapted from the new WHO global TB strategy, 2016-35, approved by the World Health Assembly in May 2014. Country representatives gathered to discuss the framework and its implementation at a meeting co-hosted by WHO and the ERS in Rome in collaboration with the Italian Ministry of Health.

Italy is one of the 21 European countries addressed by the framework. The 33 countries, territories and areas also include seven from the Americas, three from WHO's Eastern Mediterranean Region, and two from WHO's Western Pacific Region.

"Low TB-burden countries already have the means to drive down TB cases dramatically by 2035," said Dr Hiroki Nakatani, assistant director-general, WHO. "Universal health coverage, which ensures everyone has access to the health services they need without suffering financial hardship as a result, is the bedrock. The key is to target smart TB interventions towards the people who need them most."

The new WHO framework highlights the effectiveness of eight key interventions including to ensure funding and stewardship for planning and services of high quality; address most vulnerable and hard-to-reach groups; address special needs of migrants; cross-border issues; undertake screening for active TB and latent TB infection in high-risk groups and provide appropriate treatment; manage outbreaks; optimize MDR-TB prevention and care; ensure continued surveillance and program monitoring and evaluation; invest in research and new tools; support global TB control.