

The scourge of tuberculosis (TB) in prisons remains a persistent problem; rates among inmates remain much higher—from 5 to up to 50 times—than those of national averages across both the developed and the developing world. Prisoners, and people who work in prisons, are known to be especially vulnerable to the disease. However, it is not known how many people in prison become infected with *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* or develop active TB each year compared with the general population. A systematic review in *PLoS Medicine* has sought to address this question, and attempts also to calculate what percentage of latent TB infection and active TB in the general population is attributable to exposure in prison.

The study highlighted that improvements in TB control in prisons would not only help to protect prisoners and prison staff from the spread of TB, but would also reduce national TB burdens. The review also demonstrates how poor our current understanding of the problem is.

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