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Review Article

Recent advances in tuberculosis: A comprehensive review of emerging trends in pathogenesis, diagnostics, treatment, and prevention

Abdullah Salim Al-Karawi[1]*, Afraa Ali Kadhim[1], Maha M Kadum[1]

[1]*Dept. of Microbiology, College of Science, Mustansiriyah University, Baghdad, Iraq*

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ABSTRACT

It is an in-depth analysis of a globally significant infectious disease, tuberculosis (TB). It covers the epidemiology, pathogenesis, diagnosis, treatment and prevention of TB with attention to its successes and shortcomings. The review examines this complicated relationship between Mycobacterium tuberculosis and the human host. It describes how outcomes move from latent infection to active disease. An Overview It introduces the current diagnostic methods, therapeutic regimens and preventive strategies; repeated emphasis is placed on targeted interventions and public health efforts. Also, the review covers future efforts in TB research and control that will further improve prevention and treatment. These include vaccines; new drugs (including a quest for novel agents); improved diagnostics (such as more rapid tests or smear-free methods); public health interventions such as policies on occupational exposures to respiratory rusts; integrated care models including continuity of services between Through these points the review illuminates how much can still be accomplished in terms of controlling–and even eliminating entirely–TB, with ramifications for global public health.

1. Introduction

Tuberculosis (TB) is an international public health issue, afflicting millions of people around the world. Known as Mycobacterium tuberculosis, it mostly affects the lungs (tuberculosis), but can also attack other parts of the body. TB is an ancient disease that's been around for thousands of years.[1]

TB remains a serious problem, with some 10 million new cases and 1.5 million deaths estimated every year. Disproportionately affecting low- and middle-income countries, poverty, density of population (overcrowding), limited access to health care all play a part in its spread. But high-income countries are faced with their own TB crisis, caused by immigration and drug resistance or population movements.[2,3]

Mycobacterium tuberculosis is a very adaptable and resilient bacterial species that can live in many environments. The major route of transmission is inhalation of droplets from persons with active pulmonary TB that incorporate bacteria expelled during coughing, sneezing and speaking. Such infected droplet particles can easily be breathed into the lungs where they establish infection itself.[1,4]

TB manifests itself in various forms, from latent infection to active disease that involves symptoms like persistent cough or fever and weight loss. Therefore, timely and accurate diagnosis is essential to effective management and control of TB.[5]

The traditional methods of diagnosing TB are microscopy and culture-based techniques, but these lack sensitivity, speed and complexity. But the past several years has seen great improvements in techniques for

* *Corresponding author*.
E-mail address: abdullah.s.shaker@uomustansiriyah.edu.iq (A. Salim Al-Karawi).

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diagnosing TB like molecular-based assays, genotypic and phenotypic drug susceptibility testing, even point of care tests. These new diagnostic techniques are ushering in a revolutionary approach to TB diagnosis. Faster and more accurate than the old, they reduce delays in begin-ning treatment for patients.[6]

These medicines are used to treat TB in combination with long-term use of the old standbys, usually six months or more. These serve as the fundamentals of TB treatment, but what with various strains of drug-resistant tuberculosis (including multidrug-resistant and extensively resistant tropes), effective therapy is ever more difficult. The drugs and treatment regimens Bedaquiline, Delamanid have shown the way in beating MDR-TB.[7,8]

Attack Prevention is a necessary step in thwarting the spread of TB. Vaccination with Bacillus Calmette-Guérin (BCG) provides some protection against severe forms of TB for children under five years old. Moreover, methods of detecting and treating LTBI among high-risk groups can prevent active TB.[9]

Knowing how TB is formed will lead to effective intervention. Disease outcome depends on the interplay between host immune responses and bacterial factors. Active areas of research include molecular mechanisms involved in M. tuberculosis pathogenesis, including some immune evasion strategies and the processes underlying granuloma formation.[10]

Hopefully this broad review will provide a summary of recent advances in the diagnosis, treatment, prevention and understanding of tuberculosis. Through this, we hope to help advance the battle against tuberculosis as a global challenge in health and improve outcomes for those afflicted by the disease.

2. Tuberculosis Pathogenesis

The pathogenesis of TB is the outcome of this complicated relationship between man and microbe Mycobacterium tuberculosis (M. tuberculosis). The pathogenesis of TB begins with the aspiration or inspiration into lungs as well as throat, of M. tuberculosis bacilli which eventually reach the infected person's tissues and allow this process to begin. Here are the key stages of TB pathogenesis:[1,11]

1. Exposure to M. tuberculosis: Inhalation of aerosolized M. tuberculosis bacteria is the beginning step in TB pathogenesis. At the entrance to the lungs, bacilli meet up with body immune defenses triggering further host-pathogen interactions.
2. Primary infection: Generally, the immune system is able to check this initial infection and a form of TB develops in which there are no symptoms or transmissibility: it's known as latent tuberculosis (LTBI). But in some people, particularly those with compromised immune systems, an infection may progress to active TB disease..
3. Granuloma formation: After M. tuberculosis infection, the immunological reaction caused by the host results in granuloma formation (organized structures containing immune cells), chiefly macrophages and T-cells. Granulomas have a major role in fighting the infection and keeping M. tuberculosis from spreading further.
4. Latent TB Infection (LTBI): M. tuberculosis sits at rest within granulomas in people with LTBI, but may become reawakened and lead on to active TB under conditions of immunosuppression or other defects that impair immune function.
5. Reactivation and active TB Disease: If the immune system is weakened, latent M. tuberculosis can be reactivated, and the bacteria escape granulomas to cause active TB disease again. This presents itself as either pulmonary TB or extrapulmonary tuberculosis, affecting tissues in various organs not found within the lungs.
6. Transmission: During coughing or sneezing, individuals with active TB disease can aerosolize infectious respiratory secretions containing M. tuberculosis and thereby transmit infection to others.

There are many contributing factors both from the individual host and infecting M. tuberculosis bacteria as well as environmental conditions involved in TB pathogenesis. These factors interact to determine whether an individual becomes latently infected, moves on to active disease or remains asymptomatic.

3. Tuberculosis Diagnostics

The diagnosis of tuberculosis (TB) is a major facet in its management and control. Accurate and timely diagnosis is the prerequisite for effective treatment, prevention of transmission and decreasing TB-related morbidity or mortality. The difficulty of TB diagnosis lies in the diverse manifestations, testing for both latent tuberculosis infection (LTBI) and active disease peaks, forming resistance to drugs. In addition, TB often appears together with other infectious diseases and comorbidities which makes it even harder to identify.[12,13]

Traditional TB diagnosis placed great emphasis on microbiological methods like sputum smear microscopy and culture for Mycobacterium tuberculosis (the agent of this disease), but these techniques are blind spots in sensitivity terms–especially where extrapulmonary infection or co-infection with HIV is concerned. This has led to ongoing development and use of ever more sensitive, specific, rapid and easy-to-use diagnostic technologies.[14]

By introducing tests such as nucleic acid amplification tests (NAATs), and line probe assays (LPAs) to test for typhoid fever bacteria, dangerous drug resistance mutations

have also been detected. Besides that, though, other tests not immediately linked to microorganisms themselves have introduced TB testing procedures such as interferon-gamma release assays (IGRAs) and high tech imaging techniques like digital chest radiography. These tests provide data concerning differences between LTBI and active TB. They can also be used to assess disease intensity levels, as well as for diagnosing complications related with tuberculosis.[15–18]

Whole genome sequencing (WGS), loop mediated isothermal amplification, breath tests for volatile organic compounds and urine assay for lipoarabinomannan are all new methods that can increase the accuracy of TB diagnosis; also improve its accessibility. These cutting-edge technologies also have the potential of point-of-care testing, increased sensitivity in certain groups (children or immunocompromised patients), and even direct drug resistance patterns observed from clinical specimens.[19,20]

Indeed, while these developments have been made possible by enormous advancements in technology and medicine since the late 19th century, challenges remain particularly in resource-limited settings where access to such sophisticated diagnostic tools may be limited. Fighting TB on a global scale encompasses efforts to expand access to reliable diagnostic methods, increase the development of new technologies and Research & Development (R&D), as well as integrating diagnostics into comprehensive programs for treatment.[20,21]

To sum up, the environment for testing TB has come a long way. There are now many diagnostic tests available to doctors and public health workers. Accurate, rapid and accessible diagnostic methods: These are key to the global TB epidemic's being brought under control by 2035. We must continue investing in research, strengthening healthcare systems and ensuring that everyone at risk of TB has equitable access to quality diagnostics.

4. Tuberculosis Treatment

TB treatment involves traditional, novel and emerging methods for curing the infection of tuberculosis itself, blocking transmission and treating strains resistant to a powerful class or classes of anti-TB drugs. Nevertheless, the cornerstone of TB treatment remains a multidrug regimen to treat Mycobacterium tuberculosis itself. The treatment regime is tailored on the basis of factors such as whether it's pulmonary TB or extrapulmonary TB, drug susceptibility testing results and other comorbidities. Here's an overview of traditional, novel, and emerging TB treatment strategies;[22]

5. Traditional TB Treatment

1. First-line anti-TB drugs: Isoniazid, rifampicin, ethambutol and pyrazinamide are the standard first-line drugs used to treat TB. These drugs are usually given in combination for an initial intensive phase followed by a continuation phase.[7,23,24]
2. Directly observed therapy (DOT): Traditional DOT is where healthcare providers actually see patients taking their anti-TB medication, so as to ensure adherence and treatment completion.[25]
3. Treatment duration: The usual length of standard treatment for drug-sensitive TB is 6 months–2 months intensive and 4 month continuation.[7,26]

6. Novel and Emerging TB Treatment

1. Shortened treatment regimens: Studies are under way to devise shorter, effective regimens of treatment that patients can better adhere to and from which they have better outcomes.[27]
2. Bedaquiline and delamanid: These are new drugs approved to treat multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) and extensively drug resistant, or XDR-TB. They provide further choices in managing case of drug-resistant TB.[28]
3. Treatment monitoring technologies: To monitor treatment and better manage patients, new technologies are coming on line such as digital adherence technologies and point-of care drug susceptibility tests.[29]

7. Innovative Approaches

1. Host-directed therapies: A: Host-directed therapies research is aimed at modulating the host immune response to make anti-TB treatment more effective.[30]
2. Drug combinations and formulations: Testing is continuing for new combinations of drugs or alternative dosage forms and modes of administration in an effort to make treatments more effective while reducing the duration.

8. Comprehensive Care

1. Integrated care models: TB care models involve integrated treatment for tuberculosis with services for managing existing comorbidities, such as HIV infection or diabetes; attention to the social determinants of health and psychosocial support.[31]
2. Patient-centered care: Successful TB treatment outcomes rely on patient education, shared decision-making and overcoming obstacles to care.[32]

Its enduring dedication to patient care is always on the lookout for practical solutions A: The TB treatment is constantly evolving. In order to continue the progress made in treatment, research and innovative work is necessary not only within individual healthcare systems but across them along with their public health institutions.

Table 1: Summary of tuberculosis diagnostic methods: Sensitivity, specificity, and unique aspects

Diagnostic Method	Type	Description	Sensitivity	Specificity	Unique/Necessary Aspects
Sputum Smear Microscopy	Microbiological	Microscopic examination of sputum to detect acid-fast bacilli, characteristic of TB bacteria.	High	High	Widely available and cost-effective
Culture	Microbiological	Isolation and identification of TB bacteria by culturing clinical specimens.	High	High	Considered the gold standard for TB diagnosis
GeneXpert MTB/RIF	Microbiological	Molecular test that detects TB bacteria and rifampicin resistance using PCR technology.	High	High	Simultaneous detection of TB and rifampicin resistance
Nucleic Acid Amplification Tests (NAATs)	Microbiological	Molecular tests that detect the genetic material of TB bacteria, such as PCR or Loop-Mediated Isothermal Amplification.	High	High	Rapid and highly sensitive method for TB detection
Line Probe Assays (LPAs)	Microbiological	Genetic tests that detect drug resistance mutations in TB bacteria, such as the GenoType MTBDRplus assay.	High	High	Detects drug resistance mutations in addition to TB diagnosis
Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS)	Microbiological	A comprehensive genetic analysis of the complete genome of TB bacteria, allowing for detailed strain characterization.	High	High	Enables detailed understanding of TB strains and drug resistance
Xpert MTB/RIF Ultra	Microbiological	An enhanced version of GeneXpert MTB/RIF that provides increased sensitivity for detecting TB and rifampicin resistance.	High	High	Improved sensitivity for TB detection and drug resistance testing
Loop-Mediated Isothermal Amplification (LAMP)	Microbiological	A rapid, molecular diagnostic technique that amplifies specific DNA sequences of TB bacteria under isothermal conditions.	High	High	Simple and cost-effective method with potential for point-of-care use
Chest X-ray	Non-Microbiological	Radiographic examination to identify lung abnormalities suggestive of TB infection.	Variable	Variable	Provides visual evidence of TB-related lung abnormalities
Tuberculin Skin Test (TST)	Non-Microbiological	Injection of purified protein derivative (PPD) into the skin to assess immune response to TB antigens.	Moderate	High	Widely used, but cannot differentiate between latent and active TB
Interferon-Gamma Release Assays (IGRAs)	Non-Microbiological	Blood tests that measure interferon-gamma release by immune cells in response to TB antigens.	Moderate to High	High	Can help differentiate between latent and active TB infection
Molecular Drug Susceptibility Testing (DST)	Microbiological	Molecular tests that determine the susceptibility of TB bacteria to various anti-TB drugs.	High	High	Guides selection of effective anti-TB medications
Bronchoscopy	Non-Microbiological	A procedure in which a thin, flexible tube is inserted through the nose or mouth into the lungs to collect samples.	Variable	Variable	Useful for obtaining samples from deep within the lungs
Pleural Fluid Analysis	Non-Microbiological	Examination of fluid accumulated in the pleural space around the lungs for TB bacteria or other indicators of infection.	Variable	Variable	Helps diagnose TB in cases involving pleural effusion

Table 2: Recent advancements and impact in tuberculosis treatment

Recent Activities in Tuberculosis Treatment	Description	Implications and Impact
Development of Shortened Treatment Regimens	Ongoing research and clinical trials to evaluate shorter, effective treatment regimens for drug-susceptible and drug-resistant forms of TB.	Potential to improve treatment adherence, completion rates, and reduce treatment-related costs.
Introduction of New Drugs for MDR-TB and XDR-TB	Approval and implementation of novel drugs such as bedaquiline and delamanid for the treatment of multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) and extensively drug-resistant TB (XDR-TB).	Offers critical options for managing drug-resistant TB cases, addressing a significant public health challenge.
Expansion of Telemedicine for TB Care	Utilization of telemedicine and digital health platforms to support remote monitoring, medication adherence, and patient follow-up in TB treatment.	Enhances access to care, particularly in underserved areas, and improves continuity of care for TB patients.
Integration of TB and HIV Care Services	Enhanced efforts to integrate TB and HIV care services, addressing the unique treatment challenges faced by individuals co-infected with TB and HIV.	Aims to optimize treatment outcomes, reduce healthcare disparities, and strengthen health systems' capacity for dual disease management.
Research on Host-Directed Therapies	Investigation into host-directed therapies to modulate the host immune response and enhance the effectiveness of anti-TB treatment.	Offers potential for novel adjunctive treatments that complement existing anti-TB drugs and improve treatment outcomes.
Implementation of Digital Adherence Technologies	Adoption of digital tools for monitoring medication adherence, treatment response, and side effects in TB patients.	Supports personalized care, early intervention, and real-time data-driven decision-making in TB treatment.
Advancements in Point-of-Care Diagnostics	Progress in the development and deployment of rapid point-of-care tests for drug susceptibility testing, contributing to personalized treatment approaches.	Facilitates timely treatment adjustments, reduces delays in initiating appropriate therapy, and addresses emerging drug resistance patterns.
Impact of Social Determinants of Health on TB Treatment	Recognition of social determinants of health and their influence on TB outcomes, leading to interventions that address housing, food security, and economic stability.	Promotes holistic approaches that address underlying social factors impacting TB prevention, care, and treatment outcomes.

Table 3: Newly treatments for tuberculosis: mechanisms and distinctive characteristics

Novel Treatments for Tuberculosis	Mechanism of Action	Distinctive and Unique Characteristics
Bedaquiline	Inhibits ATP synthase, disrupting energy production in TB bacteria	First new TB drug in over 40 years, specifically targeting drug-resistant TB
Delamanid	Targets the mycolic acid synthesis pathway in TB bacteria	Effective against multidrug-resistant TB, with a favorable safety profile
Pretomanid	Activates nitric oxide-dependent killing of TB bacteria	Part of a novel three-drug regimen for drug-resistant TB treatment
Linezolid	Inhibits bacterial protein synthesis by binding to the 50S ribosomal subunit	Demonstrates activity against extensively drug-resistant TB (XDR-TB)
Sutezolid	Inhibits mycolic acid biosynthesis and protein synthesis in TB bacteria	Exhibits potent bactericidal activity against drug-sensitive and drug-resistant TB
PA-824	Undergoes bioreductive activation to release nitric oxide, which is toxic to TB bacteria	Demonstrates sterilizing activity against both replicating and non-replicating TB bacteria
SQ109	Targets multiple metabolic pathways, disrupting bacterial cell wall and energy production	Exhibits a novel mechanism of action and demonstrates potent antitubercular activity
Clofazimine	Disrupts bacterial membrane potential and DNA replication in TB bacteria	Demonstrates activity against drug-resistant TB, particularly in combination regimens
Moxifloxacin	Inhibits DNA gyrase and topoisomerase IV in TB bacteria	Acts as a potent bactericidal agent against drug-sensitive and some drug-resistant TB
Levofloxacin	Inhibits DNA gyrase and topoisomerase IV in TB bacteria	Demonstrates excellent tissue penetration and intracellular accumulation
Rifapentine	Inhibits RNA synthesis by binding to the beta subunit of bacterial RNA polymerase	Offers potential for shorter treatment regimens due to its long half-life
Carbapenems	Inhibit bacterial cell wall synthesis and exert bactericidal activity	Being explored as potential adjunctive agents in multidrug-resistant TB treatment

The Table 3 is a brief summary of new treatments for tuberculosis, and their mechanisms. Each one focuses on a certain biological process or structure in the tuberculosis bacteria to stop them from growing, kill them off altogether– all contributing toward the general war against tuberculosis.

9. Tuberculosis Prevention

TB prevention strategies are important in reducing the burden of disease at both individual and population levels. These strategies are designed to prevent new infections with TB, especially people at high risk groups, as well as keeping latent forms of infection from progressing into active disease. Moreover, TB prevention programs hope to break the cycle of transmission of tuberculosis bacteria within communities. Here are key components of TB prevention: [26,33,34]

1. Vaccination: In many countries, the Bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine is given as a preventive measure against severe forms of TB in children. Although the BCG vaccine does not completely guard against TB infection, it is effective in preventing severe forms of TB (such as tuberculous meningitis and miliaryT B) In young children.
2. Screening and testing: Through targeted testing and screening programs targeting latent TB infection, populations can be identified in advance so that early detection and treatment will prevent the progression to active tuberculosis disease. Those at highest risk, such as those in close contact with TB patients and the immuno-compromised are usually tested.
3. Treatment of latent TB Infection (LTBI): Indeed, giving preventive therapy to people with LTBI reduces the chances of developing active TB disease considerably. Some anti-TB medications often used in treating LTBI are isoniazid and rifapentine, which have been shown effective at preventing the progression to active TB.
4. Infection control measures: Practicing infection control in healthcare settings; congregate settings (such as correctional facilities, mental hospitals and homeless shelters); and households with a member having active TB is necessary to prevent the spread of TB bacteria.
5. Addressing social determinants: Preventing the transmission of TB and improving overall community health means not only dealing with acute forms of the disease but also addressing underlying social determinants such as poverty, malnutrition and lack access to healthcare.
6. Education and awareness: Such activities are of great importance to educating the public about TB, its symptoms, transmission and preventive methods. Giving communities knowledge about TB prevention is critical to reducing stigma, encouraging early diagnosis and adherence to preventive therapy.

Table 4: Comprehensive overview of tuberculosis prevention strategies: Implications and impact

Tuberculosis Prevention Strategies	Description	Implications and Impact
BCG Vaccination	Administration of the Bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine to prevent severe forms of TB, particularly in children.	Reduces the burden of severe TB in children and provides long-term protection.
Targeted Testing and Screening	Identification of individuals at high risk for TB through targeted testing and screening programs, allowing for early detection and treatment.	Enables early diagnosis and treatment, reducing the risk of TB transmission.
Treatment of Latent TB Infection	Provision of preventive therapy to individuals with latent TB infection to reduce the risk of developing active TB disease.	Prevents the progression to active TB, contributing to TB elimination efforts.
Infection Control Measures	Implementation of infection control measures in healthcare and congregate settings to prevent the spread of TB bacteria.	Minimizes the risk of nosocomial and community-based transmission of TB.
Addressing Social Determinants	Strategies to address social determinants of health, such as poverty and malnutrition, to reduce TB transmission and improve community health.	Addresses underlying factors that contribute to TB disparities and prevalence.
Education and Awareness Campaigns	Public health education campaigns to raise awareness about TB, its symptoms, transmission, and preventive measures.	Promotes early recognition of TB symptoms, reduces stigma, and encourages care-seeking behavior.
Multisectoral Collaboration	Collaborative efforts involving healthcare providers, public health agencies, community organizations, and policymakers for comprehensive TB prevention.	Strengthens capacity for coordinated action, resource mobilization, and policy development in TB prevention.

7. Multisectoral collaboration: Comprehensive TB prevention strategies require unprecedented cooperation between healthcare providers, public health agencies, community organizations and politicians.

10. Future Direction

1. Vaccines: Vaccines against tuberculosis that are more advanced and effective, especially in high-burden areas.
2. Drug development: Developing new medications and treatment methods to combat ordinary strains of tuberculosis.
3. Point-of-care diagnostics: Developing rapid, accurate diagnostic aids that can be easily used to diagnose tuberculosis (in particular those suitable for resource-limited settings).
4. Public health interventions: Social determinants of health and TB disparities: Public Health Strategies.
5. Integrated care models: Developing integrated care models to treat TB together with other health problems, such as HIV/AIDS or non-communicable diseases.
6. Research investment: Increasing investment in research on TB pathogenesis, host-pathogen interactions and immune responses to improve treatment.

These future directions aim to make tuberculosis prevention, diagnosis and treatment better in order that global TB control may be accomplished.

11. Conclusion

In short, tuberculosis (TB) remains a major international health problem. Millions of people around the world suffer from it. The pathogenesis of TB is a seemingly endless battle between man and microbe, with results ranging from latent infection to active disease. There are many ways to lighten the burden of TB, such as prevention strategies like vaccination and testing people at risk for infection and their contacts. One can also control its spread inside infected households. In fighting this disease, the way forward lies in vaccine development; discovering new drugs or ways to make existing ones more effective and focusing on diagnostics so that tests can become even faster (rapid tests) which will speed up diagnosis. Perhaps prognosis will not be beyond our grasp one day either? These promises also imply a lot for public health across all regions of world.

12. Source of Funding

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13. Conflicts of Interest

None.

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Author biography

Abdullah Salim Al-Karawi, - https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5532-7508

Afraa Ali Kadhim, - https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2309-9691

Maha M Kadum, - https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3408-4893

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