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a Results of the 2012-2014 tuberculosis drug resistance survey

The second South African Tuberculosis Drug Resistance Survey (2012-2014) was undertaken by the NICD to determine the prevalence of MDR-TB and other types of drug-resistant TB in all nine South African provinces, and to assess changes relative to the previous survey conducted in 2001-2. The survey enrolled participants in 442 randomly selected health facilities across the country with just over 200 000 people screened. Findings were recently reported by NICD and are available at www.nicd.ac.za.

The current survey confirmed that the prevalence of multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) is stable (2.8% of all TB cases) compared to the previous survey conducted in 2001-2 (2.9%) and is lower relative to that reported globally (7.7% of all TB cases). Although MDR-TB has remained stable nationally, there has been an almost doubling of resistance to rifampicin (1.8% to 3.4%), the main drug for TB treatment, in patients without any previous history of TB treatment. Provincial variation of MDR-TB prevalence was observed, with the highest prevalence observed in Mpumalanga (5.1%), which was also the case in the previous survey. Among

those with MDR-TB, 1 in 20 had extensively drug-resistant TB (XDR-TB), which is an even more resistant type of TB.

The NICD is currently undertaking further analyses and additional investigations to inform the TB control programme of risk factors for MDR-TB, including a mapping of hotspot areas for drug-resistant TB, and appropriate control interventions. Early diagnosis and treatment is still the mainstay of TB control and preventing MDR-TB. South Africa has introduced the latest technology (Gene Xpert) that can rapidly detect drug resistance; utilization needs to be closely monitored and diagnosed patients need to be started on treatment as quickly as possible. The findings of this survey and additional analyses currently underway will help inform the allocation of resources and expertise to respond to the TB epidemic.

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