



Treatment Action Group

Higher Funding for TB Research Signals Hope, but Governments Must Dramatically Increase Spending to End TB

Before the World Health Organization Global Ministerial Conference on Ending TB in the Sustainable Development Era, advocates call on all countries to increase support for TB research to reach global targets.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 8, 2017—Global funding for tuberculosis (TB) research reached a previously unreported high of \$726 million in 2016, according to [a report](#) released today by Treatment Action Group (TAG) and the United Nations–hosted Stop TB Partnership. This represents a \$100 million increase over 2015 levels and marks the first time annual funding for TB research and development (R&D) has exceeded \$700 million since TAG began tracking spending in 2005. Although higher than in previous years, this amount remains woefully inadequate when judged against the innovation gaps holding back the response to TB, which is the world’s leading cause of death from a single infectious agent.

In October, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced that TB killed 1.7 million people in 2016 and caused 10.4 million new cases of TB disease. “WHO’s new TB burden estimates highlight the persistent lethality of the TB epidemic in the face of chronic underfunding and limited scientific progress,” said Mark Harrington, TAG executive director. “Exceeding \$700 million in funding for TB R&D in 2016 is a hopeful sign, but with at least \$2 billion needed annually, this must be the preliminary ascent, not the peak. We have to make up for decades of underinvestment and scientific neglect.” The Stop TB Partnership estimates that the world needs to spend \$9 billion on TB R&D from 2016 to 2020 to stay on track with the global goal of ending TB by 2030.

TAG released the report, [The Ascent Begins: Tuberculosis Research Funding Trends, 2005–2016](#), a week before ministers of health and high-ranking officials from over 90 countries will meet in Moscow at the first Global Ministerial Conference on Ending TB in the Sustainable Development Era, convened by the WHO and hosted by the government of the Russian Federation. The Ministerial Conference will culminate in a signed political declaration committing ministers of health and other agencies to work with each other and within their governments to end the TB epidemic by 2030, as called for by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the WHO End TB Strategy. That strategy indicates that universal access to currently

existing technologies will not be enough to reduce TB incidence and mortality to the desired near-elimination levels; instead, ending TB by 2030 will require introducing new tools to prevent, diagnose, and treat TB no later than 2025.

“Ministerial engagement on TB R&D is important, but unless we have heads of state committing to fill the TB research funding gap, we will go nowhere,” said Dr. Lucica Ditiu, executive director of the Stop TB Partnership. “We must raise the TB R&D topic on the political agenda, through our continuous advocacy, and the first-ever United Nations High-Level Meeting on Tuberculosis in 2018. And political commitments and discussions must translate into concrete actions. Governments must increase their spending on TB research to develop the innovations we need to end TB.”

The TAG/Stop TB Partnership report cautions that the spending increase observed in 2016 is mostly attributable to existing major donors such as the U.S. National Institutes of Health and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which together have contributed over half of all reported funding for TB research since 2005. Pharmaceutical industry expenditures on TB R&D declined for the fifth straight year.

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Download the report [*The Ascent Begins: Tuberculosis Research Funding Trends, 2005–2016*](#)

More information:

1. [Country-Specific TB Research Funding Targets](#)
2. [WHO Global Ministerial Conference on Ending Tuberculosis](#)
3. [G20 Leaders Declaration](#) (para. 22 mentions TB R&D)
4. [BRICS Leaders Xiamen Declaration](#) (para. 64 mentions TB R&D)

About TAG: Treatment Action Group is an independent, activist, and community-based research and policy think tank fighting for better treatment and prevention, a vaccine, and a cure for HIV, TB, and hepatitis C virus (HCV). TAG works to ensure that all people with HIV, TB, and HCV receive lifesaving treatment, care, and information. We are science-based treatment activists working to expand and accelerate vital research and effective community engagement with research and policy institutions.

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