



## TB DOTS Guidelines Pakistan

Tuberculosis (TB) is highly prevalent in Pakistan. The estimated incidence of TB is around 250,000 per year in Pakistan: in fact, Pakistan ranks 6<sup>th</sup> among the 22 high burden countries of TB in the world. The Pakistan government has therefore given high priority to TB control. It has declared TB as national emergency in 2001, and have expanded the WHO recommended TB control strategy (or DOTS) throughout the health services of the Ministry of Health by May 2005. However, this progress has been seriously compromised after the earthquake.

The TB epidemic could become much worse in the earthquake affected areas. The appalling living situations are unfortunately favorable conditions for the development and spread of TB. Interruption of TB care could result in the increase of TB cases, particularly in an incurable form of multi-drug resistant TB. When the earthquake occurred, around 7,000 people were receiving TB treatment in the affected areas. Moreover, several thousands people are anticipated to develop TB in the coming months due to their difficult living conditions. Provision of continued care is important.

The Ministry of Health, with the help of WHO, has been trying to rehabilitate the earthquake-affected TB-DOTS care. This obviously needs collaboration with NGOs and all other health care providers. In this regard, the Ministry of Health would request the following:

- Use the national treatment regimens: The national regimens are in line with the global recommendations, and include the following (table 1).

CATEGORY	REGIMEN	
	Intensive phase	Continuation phase
<b>I (new cases)</b>	<b>2months of HREZ</b>	<b>6months of HE</b>
<b>II (retreatment cases)</b>	<b>2months of SHREZ, plus 1 one month of RHEZ</b>	<b>5months of HRE</b>

*H=isoniazid;R=rifampicin; E=ethambutol;Z=pirazinamide;S=streptomycin*

- Directly observed treatment should be ensured in all Rifampicin containing regimens; all possible means of supervision including community volunteers should be explored.
- Use the high-quality fixed dose combination tablets: the National TB Programme uses the globally recommended fixed dose combination tablets of HRZE and HR. Pre-qualified drugs taking into account rifampicin-bioavailability are recommended.
- **Avoid the use of TB drugs, particularly rifampicin and streptomycin for the treatment of non-TB illnesses as this could result in the development of drug resistant TB in the community.**

Further information including the national guidelines for TB management are available at:

- National TB Programme, TB center, Rawalpindi: Tel. 0519290510, fax 0519290508, email [tbc@comsats.net.pk](mailto:tbc@comsats.net.pk)
- Provincial TB Programme, North-West Frontier (NWFP), Peshawar: tel 0919211663
- WHO-Pakistan Country office: 0519255077
- WHO Coordinating emergency cell: tel 0519263239, email [health@whopak.org](mailto:health@whopak.org)