



What is CREATE doing about XDR TB?

The recent incident of an American traveler with extensively drug resistant tuberculosis (XDR TB) has refocused attention on this important and emerging problem. An outbreak of XDR TB that particularly affected HIV-infected people in Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa, was the cause of widespread concern when first reported last August, and a global effort to respond to this problem is being coordinated by the [World Health Organization](#).

Because two of the CREATE studies include large populations of HIV-infected people in South Africa ([Thibela](#) and [ZAMSTAR](#)), the CREATE Executive Committee has been intensively engaged in assuring that appropriate actions are taken to respond to this crisis, and that CREATE is contributing to a coordinated local, regional and global response to XDR TB.

Examples of the CREATE response are shown below.

- **Surveillance**
 - The ZAMSTAR study has performed studies of the prevalence of previously undiagnosed TB in large representative populations in the Western Cape of South Africa and in Zambia. TB isolates detected during these studies are being tested for drug resistance, so that a population-based estimate of the prevalence of MDR and XDR TB will be available soon. These data will be shared with national and global authorities.
 - The Thibela TB study is conducting prospective surveillance for MDR and XDR TB among gold miners, in collaboration with the Medical Research Council, National Health Laboratory Services and the Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics (FIND).

- **Strengthening Diagnostics and Research**
 - The Thibela TB study is collaborating with the MRC and FIND (see above) to evaluate two rapid diagnostic tests for rifampin resistance, the genomic Hain test and the Fast-Plaque TB test, a phage-based rapid method for identifying resistance.
 - Thibela TB and Johns Hopkins University plan to evaluate additional rapid diagnostic tests for rifampin resistance and fluoroquinolone resistance, as part of a proposed NIH study.
 - Johns Hopkins University is supporting the Medical Research Council's laboratory capacity through an NIH-funded initiative to expand the use of the MGIT™ (Mycobacterial Growth Indicator Tube) system for culture and drug susceptibility testing.

- **Infection Control**
 - Detailed infection control guidelines are being developed to protect both patients and staff in the ZAMSTAR and Thibela studies. These guidelines will be consistent with recent WHO recommendations for infection control in health care settings.

- **Education**
 - The Education and Training programs within both ZAMSTAR and Thibela are providing multiple levels of training on drug resistant TB to study staff, community advisory boards and other partners.

- **Advocacy and Policy**
 - CREATE is working with multiple partners in South Africa and globally to mobilize resources, promote research, develop policies and design and implement effective control strategies for MDR and XDR TB. Policy and advocacy officers for each of the CREATE projects are working with the CREATE Policy and Advocacy Core to coordinate this effort.

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