The challenge of Tuberculosis

What is the issue?

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India has seen slight progress in dealing with TB but much remains to be done.

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What are the statistics?

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- From an estimated 2.84 million new cases in 2015, the number dropped marginally to 2.79 million in 2016.
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- In terms of mortality, the drop was from 0.51 million in 2015 to 0.43 million in 2016.
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- The number of deaths and the incidence rate have been falling both globally and in India.
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- Drug resistance has also increased drastically over the years.
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- More than 0.58 million people had TB strains that were resistance to the drug ‘Rifampicin’ alone.
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- Also, estimate of multi-drug-resistant TB cases increased marginally to 84,000.
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- But only 33,000 people were enrolled for suitable treatment.
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What are the targets?

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- ‘End TB strategy‘envisions global reduction of 20% in incidence and 35% in mortality by 2020, taking 2015 as the base year.

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- To reach that target, the global drop in incidence has to be 4-5% a year which is currently only 2%.
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- Also, deaths should come down from the current 16% to 10%.
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- Achieving the targets will largely hinge on India as it accounting for the highest TB incidence (23%) and mortality (26%) globally.
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What is the strategy ahead?

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- **Notification -** Recording and notifying the WHO about every diagnosed patient is an important first step.
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- While notifying has considerably improved over the past few years, more than 25% gap between incidence & reporting still exists.
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- Though notification was made mandatory in 2012, multiple surveys indicate large scale under-reporting.
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- **Prevention -** Baby steps have been taken to offer preventive TB treatment to a small (5%) number of people who are HIV-positive.
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- Also, few children who were faced with a higher risk of contracting TB were also offered such care.
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- **Funding -** Notably, of the total fund of $500 million for handling TB, domestic funding has accounted for 74%.
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- While, improved domestic funding is a positive, much more is needed in terms of funds and institutional commitments.
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Source: The Hindu

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