

WHO's Guidelines to tackle Tuberculosis

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance

Why in news?

Recently, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has released new guidelines to tackle tuberculosis and undernutrition.

- The updated [tuberculosis \(TB\)](#) guidelines that integrate nutritional support into standard treatment, a major shift toward a more patient-centered and holistic approach.
- The shift in the global TB policy is inspired by the pathbreaking **RATIONS trial** by Indian researchers.

New recommendations

- **Nutritional assessment & counseling** - These services should now be offered to all people with TB and their household contacts.
- This recognizes that a significant proportion of people in households with TB may be undernourished.
- **Targeted nutritional support** - All TB patients who are undernourished should receive nutritional interventions, regardless of their age, pregnancy status, drug-resistance or severity of undernutrition. The goal is to optimize clinical outcomes.
- **Food assistance for household contacts** - In food-insecure regions, the WHO now advises providing food assistance to the households of TB patients to help prevent them from developing the disease.

Current status of TB

- **WHO Global TB Report 2024** - India accounted for an estimated 26% of the world's TB cases in 2023, totaling around 2.7 million cases.
- **Decline in incidence rate of TB cases** - Notable 17.7% decline in the TB incidence rate from 2015 to 2023, a rate more than double the global average of 8.3%.
- **Goal** - Eliminate tuberculosis (TB) by 2025, 5 years before the global

target of 2030.

- **Mortality** - TB deaths in India decreased by 21.4% between 2015 and 2023, a reduction from 28 to 22 deaths per 100,000 people.
- **Drug-resistant TB** - India has the highest burden of multidrug-resistant (MDR) or rifampicin-resistant (RR) TB.

Quick Fact

RATIONS trial

- **RATIONS** - Reducing Activation of Tuberculosis by Improvement of Nutritional Status
- It was conducted in Jharkhand by Indian researchers, and published in The Lancet.
- **Supported by** - ICMR.
- Highlighted the vital role nutrition plays in reducing mortality among people living with active TB, as well as in reducing incidence among household contacts of pulmonary tuberculosis patients.
- A 60% lower risk of TB mortality for patients who gained weight within the first two months of treatment.
- A 48% reduction in new TB cases among the family members of TB patients who received nutritional support.
- A 35% decrease in mortality among TB patients.

References

1. [Business Standard | WHO's new TB guidelines](#)
2. [WHO | WHO's new TB guidelines](#)
3. [PIB | TB Status of India](#)