New Healthcare Worker Guidelines and Practical Implications
Bob Belknap, MD
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Medicine Consultant Meeting
Speakers:
Barbara J. Seaworth, MD; Heartland National TB Center
Dick Brostrom, MD; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Manasa Velagapudi, MBBS; Creighton University Medical Center
Lisa Y. Armitage, MD, PhD; Heartland National TB Center
Bob Belknap, MD; Denver Health and Hospitals Metro TB Program
Jim McCauley, MD; Whiteriver Indian Health Services
Janice Louie, MD; San Francisco Department of Public Health

Today's presenters, CME Committee, staff and planning committee have indicated they have no commercial affiliations to disclose.
New Healthcare Worker Guidelines and Practical Implications

Bob Belknap
Director, Denver Metro TB Program
November 22, 2019

Disclosures

• None

• Some slides adapted from Dr Lynn Sosa
Outline

• Background and rationale

• What’s change and what stayed the same

• Some scenarios frequently asked questions

CDC

MMWR
Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report

Guidelines for Preventing the Transmission of Mycobacterium tuberculosis in Health-Care Settings, 2005
CDC Guidelines for Preventing TB Transmission in Health Care Settings - 2005

Summary of Recommendations

- At hire - symptom screen and IGRA or tuberculin skin test (TST) testing in those without prior history of TB or LTBI
- Post exposure – symptom evaluation and IGRA or TST testing for those with a negative test at baseline and without TB history
- Serial Screening and Testing – Recommended for health care personnel (HCP) in medium risk setting and setting with potential ongoing transmission
- Follow up of LTBI positive – treatment referral and annual symptom review
Background

2013 Aplisol shortage amplifies discussion about the need for serial testing HCP

2015
• Joint NSTC-NTNC session at the National Tuberculosis Conference
• Working group created

2017 Systematic review commenced

Research Questions

▪ What is the prevalence and incidence of LTBI among health care personnel in the United States?

▪ What is the incidence of TB disease among health care personnel in the United States?

▪ Does annual or serial testing (via TST or IGRA) of U.S. health care personnel reduce the risk of TB transmission in U.S. healthcare settings?

▪ Does annual or serial testing (via TST or IGRA) of U.S. health care personnel increase the detection of occult TB transmission in U.S. healthcare settings?

▪ Are certain individuals who work within health care facilities at higher risk of TB than others based on occupational and non-occupational factors?
Methodology

- Community Guide systematic review methods used to evaluate and summarize available evidence
- Two reviewers independently screened and abstracted data for each included study
- Disagreements were resolved by consensus
- Data analyzed using “metafor” and “meta” packages in R (v3.3.2)

Search for Evidence

- We conducted a search for studies that screened and/or tested health care personnel (HCP) for LTBI
- Electronic databases included:
  - MEDLINE, EMBASE, and Scopus
- Search period:
  - Original search: January 2006–February 2017
  - Update search: February 2017–November 2017 (MEDLINE only)
- Language restriction:
  - English only
Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

- **Inclusion Criteria**
  - Study designs
    - Randomized controlled trial (RCT), quasi-experimental, observational studies, cross-sectional surveys, other designs with concurrent comparison groups
  - Target population
    - Paid or volunteer health care workers
  - Outcomes of interest
    - Prevalence, conversion, and reversion rates; TB transmission rates; TB disease
  - Setting
    - High-income, low TB-incidence countries

- **Exclusion Criteria**
  - Study designs: case reports, editorials, commentaries, descriptive articles on nosocomial outbreaks

Search Results
Systematic Review - results

- Relatively low proportion (3%-5%) of U.S. HCP test positive for *M. tuberculosis* at baseline
- <1% of U.S. HCP previously testing negative convert to a positive test result during serial testing
- Nearly 50% of U.S. HCP previously testing positive revert to a negative test result during serial testing
- Insufficient evidence to assess incidence and transmission of TB disease among HCP
  - No cases of TB disease reported among the ~64,000 U.S. HCP included in the studies reviewed

what does this all mean?

- Updated recommendations (like the previous version) are based primarily on expert opinion
Definitions

- **Health Care Personnel (HCP)**
  - Replaces Healthcare Worker (HCW) to be consistent with current HHS and CDC preferred language
  - Definition unchanged from 2005 recommendations

- **TB screening**
  - Broad process that includes a risk assessment, symptom evaluation, a test for LTBI (either a TST or IGRA), and additional work-up for TB disease as needed

- **TB Testing**
  - IGRA or TST
2019 Recommendations – Key changes

• **Pre-placement** – IGRA or TST with symptom assessment and **individual TB risk assessment added (new)**

• **Post exposure** – Symptom evaluation and IGRA or TST testing for those with a negative test at baseline and without TB history (unchanged)

• **Serial Screening and Testing (new)**
  – Serial screening / testing not routinely recommended; can be considered for certain HCP groups
  – Annual TB education of all HCP including TB exposure risks

• **Follow up of LTBI positive HCP** – **LTBI treatment strongly recommended unless a contraindication exists (new)**

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Baseline (Pre-Placement) Screening and Testing

- **Baseline screening on hire should include:**
  - Individual TB risk assessment
  - Symptom evaluation
  - TST or IGRA (not both)

- **Low risk HCP testing positive should have second test**
  - Consistent with TB Diagnostic Guidelines
  (Lewinsohn CID 1/15/2017)
Baseline Individual Risk Assessment

Health care personnel should be considered to be at increased risk for TB if they answer “yes” to any of the following statements.

1. Temporary or permanent residence (for ≥1 month) in a country with a high TB rate (i.e., any country other than Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United States, and those in western or northern Europe)
   Or
2. Current or planned immunosuppression, including human immunodeficiency virus infection, receipt of an organ transplant, treatment with a TNF-alpha antagonist (e.g., infliximab, etanercept, or other), chronic steroids (equivalent of prednisone ≥15 mg/day for ≥1 month), or other immunosuppressive medication
   Or
3. Close contact with someone who has had infectious TB disease since the last TB test

Postexposure Screening and Testing

- Known exposure **without** adequate personal protection
- No history of positive TB test
  - Symptom assessment and TB test
  - Retest 8–10 weeks after last exposure
- History of positive TB test regardless of treatment
  - Symptom assessment, no test
**Occupational Risk – serial testing**

- No routine testing of HCP at any interval in the absence of known exposure or ongoing transmission

- Health care facilities can choose to conduct routine testing of specific HCP
  - Most health care facilities don’t need to!
  - This decision should be individualized to each facility and may be made in consultation with state/local health department

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**Non-Occupational Risk**

- Important to recognize non-occupational exposures to TB and risk factors for TB progression

- Facilities should educate HCP annually about TB
  - Include risk factors
  - Signs and symptoms
  - Encourage HCP to discuss any new exposures both occupational and non-occupational

- Decision to test HCP based on individual risk identified
Follow-Up of Positive Test Results

- HCP with positive TB test result:
  - Chest imaging
  - Symptom assessment
  - Further evaluation for TB disease if warranted

- All HCP with LTBI should be offered and encouraged to complete LTBI treatment unless a contraindication exists

Summary of Recommendation Changes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2005 Recommendation</th>
<th>2019 Recommendation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baseline (preplacement) screening and testing</td>
<td>TB screening of all HCP, including a symptom evaluation and test (IGRA or TST) for those without documented prior TB disease or LTBI.</td>
<td>TB screening of all HCP, including a symptom evaluation and test (IGRA or TST) for those without documented prior TB disease or LTBI.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preexposure screening and testing</td>
<td>Symptom evaluation for all HCP in an exposure is recognized. For HCP with a baseline negative TB test and no prior TB disease or LTBI, perform a test (IGRA or TST) when the exposure is identified. If the test is negative, do another test 8-10 weeks after the last exposure.</td>
<td>Symptom evaluation for all HCP in an exposure is recognized. For HCP with a baseline negative TB test and no prior TB disease or LTBI, perform a test (IGRA or TST) when the exposure is identified. If the test is negative, do another test 8-10 weeks after the last exposure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serial screening and testing for HCP without LTBI</td>
<td>According to health care facility and setting risk assessment. Not recommended for HCP working in low-risk health care settings. Recommended for HCP working in medium-risk health care settings and settings with potential ongoing transmission.</td>
<td>Not routinely recommended (new). Can consider for selected HCP groups (unchanged); recommend annual TB education for all HCP (unchanged), including information about TB exposure risks for all HCP (new emphasis).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation and treatment of positive test results</td>
<td>Referal to determine whether LTBI treatment is indicated.</td>
<td>Treatment is encouraged for all HCP with untreated LTBI, unless medically contraindicated (new).</td>
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Case Scenario 1

A primary care clinic located near the US-Mexico border and provides care for binational patients asks if they should continue doing annual TB tests for their health care staff.

What would you recommend?

Question #1

Would you advise them to continue doing annual testing?

1. Yes – because the population they care for is at higher risk for TB
2. No – annual testing is no longer recommended; focus resources on ensuring LTBI treatment is completed
3. Maybe – I need more information
Discussion

• What additional information might be helpful?
• Do you need to know the TB incidence in the jurisdiction?
• Does it matter where the clinic is located (i.e., near the US-Mexico border) or not?
• What if health care personnel had to be tested as part of a contact investigation the previous year?

Summary – Scenario 1

• Best Answer is #2 NO – focus on LTBI treatment and the administrative and environmental controls

• Additional information can be helpful to frame the discussion but it’s highly unlikely that a facility routinely detects unrecognized TB transmission through annual testing
• Most variability with annual testing is the known variability in the tests; <1% with TST vs 3-4% with IGRA (Dorman et al AJRCCM 2013).
Summary

- If a facility or area within a facility has consistently seen a high rate of annual conversions then the focus should be on identifying and fixing the administrative and environmental controls that are causing it.

- In that very rare scenario, it would be appropriate to continue annual testing until it was confirmed that occult TB transmission was no longer a problem.

Case Scenario 2

An Occupational Health provider calls and asks what they are supposed to do with the new individual risk assessment and can they can stop doing the facility risk assessment.
Question #2

What would you tell them?
1. The individual risk assessment is the only evaluation that is recommended now; the facility risk assessment is no longer necessary
2. The individual risk assessment is important for interpreting the TB tests; the facility risk assessment is important for determining environmental controls
3. The individual risk assessment is optional and may be helpful; the facility risk assessment is still important to decide who should continue getting an annual TB test
4. Both the individual and facility risk assessment are important and should be performed every year.

Case Scenario 2

what to do with the individual risk assessment and can they can stop doing the facility risk assessment.

– The individual risk assessment is important for interpreting the TB tests
– The facility risk assessment is important for determining environmental and administrative controls needed (a modified version is coming in a companion document)
Case Scenario 3

A friend who is a pulmonologist at a local hospital asks if she should continue to get an annual TB test because she regularly does bronchoscopies.

Case Scenario 3

• The guidelines are intentionally vague to allow flexibility since we could not predict every possible risk scenario among all health care personnel
• The most important take away from the update is that almost no one is at risk for unrecognized (occult) TB transmission from working in health care in the U.S.
Case Scenario 3

Personnel who come in contact with patients who may be TB suspects but where diagnosis is challenging

- Pulmonologists, respiratory therapists, coroners and others who assist in performing autopsies
- People working in a skilled nursing facility, particularly those working with patients who have advanced dementia

To further reduce the risk of TB transmission in US healthcare facilities the focus should be

- Stop unnecessary testing
- Treat people with known LTBI
- Know the signs and symptoms of TB so that health care personnel can recognize it early in patients, coworker or themselves
Case Scenario #4

Occupational health provider calls to ask what they should do about people who change jobs or rotate to multiple different facilities and are:

1. TST or IGRA negative
   - When do they need a repeat test?
2. TST or IGRA positive with or without prior treatment
   - When do they need a repeat CXR?

Case Scenario #4

Risk vs Fear vs Liability

1. TST or IGRA negative
   - If documentation, do a risk assessment; if no risk for new exposure, then no need for a repeat test
2. TST or IGRA positive with or without prior treatment
   - A repeat CXR is not recommended at any interval in asymptomatic people
Conclusion

2019 Guideline recommends focusing efforts on
- Baseline testing including an individual risk assessment
- Encourage health care personnel with LTBI to complete a course of treatment
- Educate all staff to recognize the symptoms of active TB and risks for potential non-occupational exposure (living, volunteering, and/or providing medical care in a country where TB is common).

Conclusion

• The guidelines do not override any local or state requirements

• They may be used to help change local requirements that are out of date relative to the actual risk for TB exposure and infection

• Companion Document focused on Implementation coming soon!
Workgroup Members

CDC/DTBE Staff
- Gibril Njie
- Sapna Bamrah Morris
- Amera Khan
- Neela Goswami
- Jerry Mazurek

CDC Partners
- Megan Casey, NIOSH
- David Kuhar, DHQP

Partners
- Bob Belknap, Denver Public Health, NTCA
- Lynn Sosa, Connecticut DPH, NTCA
- Lorna Will, NTCA

Partners, continued
- Bobbi Jo Hurst, AOHP
- MaryAnn Gruden, AOHP
- Lisa Paulos, Society of Epidemiology in TB Control, NTCA
- William Buchta, ACOEM
- Wendy Thanassi, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- Mark Lobato, NTCA
- David Lewinsohn, Oregon Health Sciences University
- Trini Mathew, Beaumont Hospital
- Randall Reves, NSTC/Denver Public Health
- Annie Wiest, AOHP
- Silvia Quevedo, APIC