

Transmission of tuberculosis (TB), Why TB spread so easily?

Tuberculosis (TB) is a contagious bacterial infection that primarily affects the lungs but can also affect other parts of the body. TB is easily transmitted from person to person through the air when an infected person coughs, sneezes, talks or even spits. This is because the TB bacteria can be suspended in the air in tiny droplets, called aerosols, for several hours and can be inhaled by someone else.

Several factors contribute to the ease with which TB is transmitted. These include:

1. Infectiousness of the TB bacteria: TB is caused by a bacterium called *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, which is highly infectious. When someone with active TB coughs or sneezes, they can release large numbers of bacteria into the air, making it easy for others to become infected.
2. Proximity and duration of exposure: TB is more likely to be transmitted in crowded or poorly ventilated environments, where people are in close proximity to each other. The risk of transmission also increases with the duration of exposure to an infected person.
3. Weakened immune system: People with weakened immune systems, such as those with HIV/AIDS or those undergoing chemotherapy, are more susceptible to TB infection and are more likely to develop active TB disease.
4. Lack of access to healthcare: People who do not have access to healthcare, or who do not receive prompt diagnosis and treatment for TB, are more likely to spread the disease to others.

To prevent the spread of TB, it is important to identify and treat infected individuals as early as possible. This can involve screening for TB infection and providing appropriate treatment to those who test positive. Additionally, measures such as good ventilation and wearing a mask can help reduce the risk of transmission in certain settings.

Australian Polyclinic,
CCA Phase 5 DHA, Lahore
0311 057 3333

Dr G Sarwar Chaudhry
MBBS (King Edward Medical College)
Fellow Royal Australasian College of Physicians (FRACP Australia)
Fellow American College of Chest Physicians (FCCP)
Conjoint Lecturer, University of Newcastle, NSW, Australia

Consultant Pulmonologist and Sleep Physician
Consultant General Physician
www.australianpolyclinic.com