

PRESS RELEASE

World TB Day 2022: Investing in research to end TB, save lives

> Ifakara, Mwananyamala Hospital host organizes an event to help raise public awareness about the disease

March 24, 2022, Dar es Salaam. Ifakara Health Institute observes the World TB Day 2022 on March 24. Each year, the world recognizes World TB Day on March 24 - an annual event that commemorates the date in 1882 when Dr. Robert Koch announced his discovery of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, the bacillus that causes tuberculosis (TB).

The theme of World TB Day 2022 – ‘**Invest to End TB. Save Lives**’ – conveys the urgent need to invest resources to ramp up the fight against TB and achieve the commitments to end TB made by global leaders. Ifakara’s work is in line with the theme due to the fact that since its inception in 1956 has been investing in research to end diseases.

To help raise public awareness and educate people about the impact of TB around the world, Ifakara along with Mwananyamala Regional Referral Hospital, have organized an event on March 24 to be held at the Mwananyamala hospital in Kinondoni, Dar es Salaam.

The event will bring together head scientists from Ifakara’s Interventions and Clinical Trials for TB department, staff from various departments at Mwananyamala hospital, social welfare workers, NGOs, and the community in general. This will be an open event with the hospital free health consultations and tests for various diseases such as TB, hypertension, diabetes and more including giving out COVID-19 vaccination.

Ifakara remains committed to investing in programmes for TB prevention and control. We work with the government through the Ministry of Health in mapping circulating TB strains and resistance patterns and testing new diagnostics for childhood TB.

Our scientists from the Interventions and Clinical Trials department, conduct trials on drugs, diagnostics and vaccines for TB treatment and prevention. In August 2020, IHI was featured in the latest World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines on TB diagnostics after working on a novel technology (Xpert MTB/RIF) for testing TB patients.

“Xpert MTB/RIF” was strongly recommended as an initial diagnostic test in adults who are suspected of TB but who also had either HIV or MDR. After the review, “Xpert MTB.RIF” was strongly recommended for all adults with signs and symptoms of TB regardless of HIV or MDR status.

Ifakara is also collaborating with Tanzania Health Promotion Support (THPS) and other NGOs - Baylor College of Medicine Children’s Foundation, Tanzania and MKUTA, in a Uhuru-TB&FP LON (“Freedom-Tuberculosis & Family Planning (FP)”) project which is funded by USAID. Launched in 2020, this is a five-year activity that aims to improve access to and use of quality TB and FP service delivery in public and private sector health facilities in four regions of Tanzania.

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At Mwananyamala Regional Referral Hospital, there are three ongoing TB projects which are under Ifakara. One of the projects focuses on *the bacille Calmette-Guérin* (BCG) TB vaccine which has a documented protective effect against meningitis and disseminated TB in children.

Currently, the hospital is also conducting a phase III clinical trial on another vaccine, Vaccine Project Management (VPM1002), a safe, well-tolerated and efficacious vaccine against TB. The VPM 1002 vaccine is a genetically modified BCG vaccine containing weakened tuberculosis-like bacteria that are better recognized by the immune cells.

More: About TB

TB remains one of the world's deadliest infectious killers. Each day, over 4,100 people lose their lives to TB and close to 30,000 people fall ill with this preventable and curable disease. For the first time in over a decade, TB deaths increased in 2020 with an estimated 10 million people falling ill with TB worldwide. Currently, TB is the 13th leading cause of death and, the 2nd leading infectious killer after COVID-19.

Based on these numbers, there is a need to accelerate investment and action in the development of new tools, especially new TB vaccines. Ending TB requires collective actions by all sectors. On World TB Day, WHO calls on everyone - individuals, communities, societies, donors and governments to do their part to end TB.

About Ifakara Health Institute (IHI)

Ifakara Health Institute (IHI) is a leading research organization in Africa with a strong track record in developing, testing and validating innovations for health. Driven by a core strategic mandate for research, training and services, the Institute's work now spans a wide spectrum, covering biomedical and ecological sciences, intervention studies, health-systems research and policy translation. [More about Ifakara.](#)

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