

Este es el primer informe realizado en España que describe la actividad de los laboratorios de microbiología respecto al diagnóstico de la TB. Tomando como base esta información, se recomienda la formación de una Red de Laboratorios para Diagnóstico de Tuberculosis en España. Se proponen los mínimos que deben de cumplir todas las CCAA y el papel que pueden jugar algunos laboratorios que realizan actividades complementarias.

Executive summary

The early detection and diagnosis of tuberculosis (TB) is one of the four actions described in the «Plan for the prevention and control of tuberculosis in Spain». This Plan was approved by the Interterritorial Council of the National Health System (CISNS) in June 2008. An analysis of the TB diagnostic situation was necessary before considering if a laboratory network for the diagnosis of TB in Spain is needed.

This document describes the global and regional situation of the diagnosis of TB in Spain. Data from the activity conducted in microbiology laboratories was collected and analyzed from an ad hoc survey distributed by the regional representatives to the TB laboratories in each autonomous region (AR).

The questionnaire was filled out by 172 laboratories from 18 ARs (response rate 83.8%). The information refers to laboratory activity carried out in 2009. Data from a previous study conducted in 2007 in the Health Area of Barcelona including 42 laboratories was also taken into account, so the analysis included information from 214 laboratories in total. The report includes detailed information about the diagnosis methods, the circuits used by laboratories to complete the diagnosis and external quality controls.

Depending on the number of samples received, more than one third of the laboratories (36.1%) received more than 2,500 samples in 2009, 37.7% received between 500 and 2,499 samples and 26.2% received less than 500 samples. Regarding the sputum smear microscopy only 39.7% of the laboratories offered the result in less than 24 hours. Laboratory categories were established according to diagnostic capacity, findings showed 13.5% of the laboratories belonged to category 3 (n=29), i.e. they perform microscopy and culture techniques, identification of the M. tuberculosis complex, first and second-line drug susceptibility testing. Most of the ARs have category 3 laboratories, except for La Rioja, Aragon, Extremadura, Castilla-La Mancha, Balearic Islands and the cities of Ceuta and Melilla.

The analysis has some limitations due to the period of time between the publishing of the report and the sending of the questionnaire to the laboratories and the number and type of laboratories surveyed.

The current report is the first one describing the activities carried out by microbiology laboratories for TB diagnosis. Based on this report the establishment of a network of laboratories for diagnosis of TB in Spain is recommended. A minimum level for diagnosis that should be achieved by all ARs is proposed and some complementary TB activities performed by certain laboratories are described.