

# FACTSHEET TUBERCULOSIS IN JAPAN



## What is TB?

Tuberculosis (TB) is caused by bacteria called “*Mycobacterium tuberculosis*” and is spread from person to person through air.

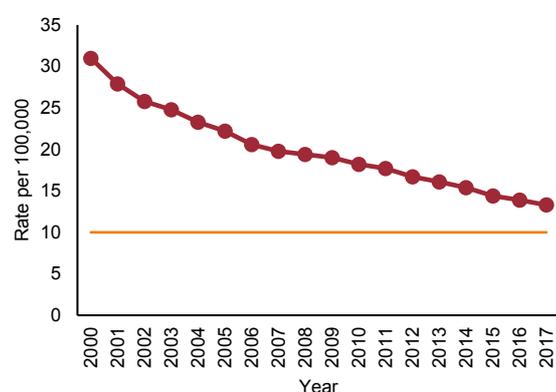
TB mainly attacks the lungs, but it can also damage any part of the body, such as the brain, kidneys, or spine. TB is curable and preventable, but a person with TB can die without treatment.

The symptoms of TB disease of the lungs include cough, chest pain, and sputum with blood. The general symptoms of TB disease also include feelings of sickness or weakness, weight loss, fever, and night sweats.

## TB in Japan

The most recent data show that a total of 16,789 persons with TB disease were newly notified in Japan in 2017 (13.3 cases per 100,000 population). Both the number of newly notified TB patients and rates per 100,000 have continued to decline (Figure 1). Japan’s national target is to reach the notification of below 10 per 100,000 by year 2020 (Figure 1).

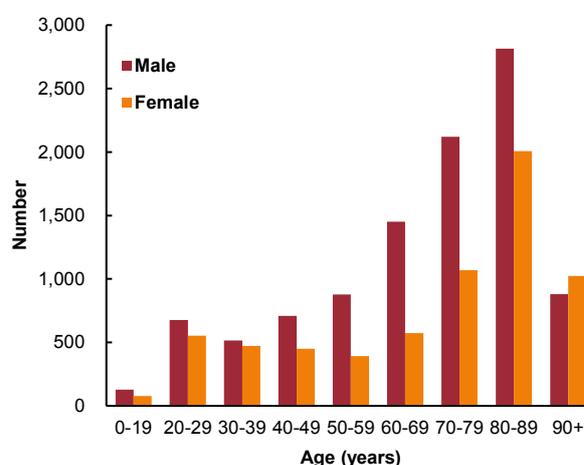
**Figure 1. Number of reported TB patients, 2000-2017**



## Sex and age distribution

In 2017, 60.6% of the notified TB patients were males and 39.4% were females. The largest number of patients were diagnosed among those aged 80 to 89 years old. The number of patients were consistently higher among males than females in all age groups but 90+ years old (Figure 2).

**Figure 2. Number of TB patients by age and sex, 2017**

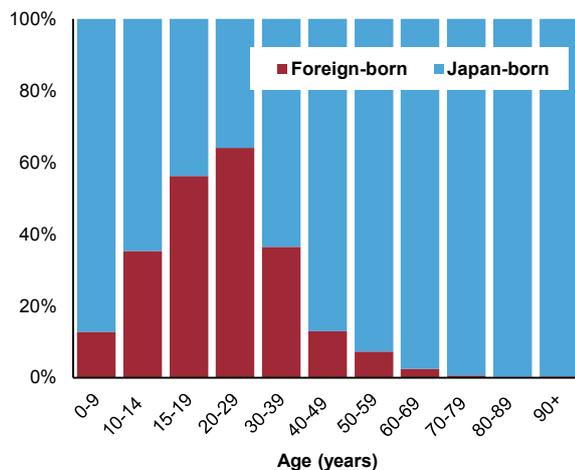


## TB among the foreign-born

Information regarding place of birth (Japan-born or foreign-born) was known for 95.7% of the newly notified TB patients (16,063/16,789) in 2017. Of those, 9.5% was born outside Japan (n=1,530). Both the number and the proportion of foreign-born patients have continued to increase.

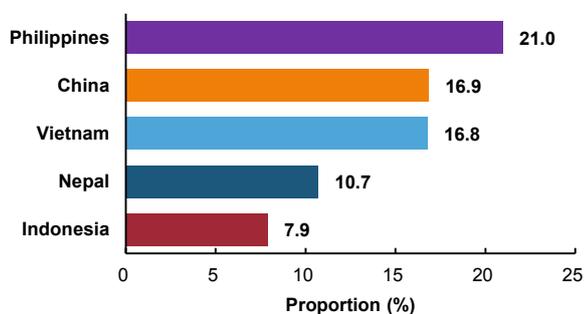
The largest number of foreign-born TB patients were diagnosed among those aged 20 to 29 years old, followed by those aged 15 to 19 years old. The proportion of foreign-born of the total newly notified TB patients was higher among the younger age group, with the proportion reaching 64.0% among those aged 20-29 years old (Figure 3).

**Figure 3. Foreign-born TB patients by age groups, 2017, n=1,530**



The Philippines was the most frequent countries of birth for foreign-born TB patients reported in 2017 (n=321, 21.0%), followed by China (n=258, 16.9%), Vietnam (n=257, 16.8%), Nepal (n=164, 10.7%), and Indonesia (n=121, 7.9%) (Figure 4).

**Figure 4. Foreign-born TB by country of birth, 2017**



## MDR TB

Multidrug-resistant (MDR) TB is a TB disease that is resistant to at least two of the best anti-TB drugs, isoniazid and rifampicin. MDR TB accounted for 0.7% (52 cases) of all newly notified TB patients in Japan with drug-susceptibility testing completed in 2017 (7,891 cases). The overall number of patients with MDR have remained stable. The number of patients among the foreign-born has slightly increased but the proportion has remained stable.

## HIV/TB

In 2017, HIV test results were known only for 8.9% (1,488/16,789) of the newly notified TB patients. Of those patients with known test results, 34 (2.3%) were HIV positive and 1,454 (97.7%) were HIV negative.

## Latent TB Infection

Persons with latent TB infection do not have any symptoms and cannot spread TB bacteria to others. They have TB bacteria in their bodies, but do not have active TB disease. About 5 to 10 percent of infected persons without treatment will develop active TB disease at some time in their lives. A total of 7,255 persons with latent TB infection were newly notified in 2017 in Japan.

## Treatment outcome

Treatment of TB disease requires multiple drugs that need to be taken for six to nine months. Among 17,539 TB patients in 2016, 69.7% of those successfully completed the prescribed treatment regimen, 21.9% died during treatment due to any cause, and 8.4% were unsuccessful due to other reasons including transferred out, still on treatment, etc. This high mortality rate is due to the large number of elderly TB patients in Japan. In fact, the 85.5% of patients aged under 60 years old successfully completed the treatment, which met the global target of TB treatment outcome (>85% treatment success) set by the World Health Organization.

All data in the factsheet is based on statistics published in The Tuberculosis Surveillance Center  
<http://www.jata.or.jp/rit/ekigaku/en>

The annual report of tuberculosis in Japan in 2018 will be also available soon.

For more information and inquiry, please contact:  
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