



Press Release

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International Team Proposes National Tuberculosis Archive: The First Comprehensive and Integrated Biological and Informatic Resource for a World-Wide Infectious Disease

Santa Fe, NM, March 3, 2006 – Writing in the journal *Science*, an international team of nine leading health and research organizations today proposed the establishment of the nation's first integrated clinical and biological information resource for Tuberculosis (TB). TB infects one third of the world's population, with 8.8 million new cases and 1.7 million deaths in 2003. TB is the leading cause of death among AIDS patients. Further, new strains of TB are emerging that are resistant to conventional antibiotic therapies.

The proposed National TB Archive would be the first integrated, web accessible, comprehensive, biological and clinical information resource for a major infectious disease. In coordination with the universal genotyping program of Centers for Disease Control, the Archive would contain a sample from every verified case of TB in the United States, together with comprehensive clinical, epidemiological, and genomic information. At present, these samples and information are dispersed among independent organizations, geographic locations, and databases. This lack of integration greatly hampers rapid response to outbreaks and analysis of the spread of drug resistant TB.

Dr. Damian Gessler, lead author of the report, and Program Leader at the National Center for Genome Resources (NCGR), Santa Fe, New Mexico, states, "The establishment of the Archive will accelerate advances in understanding critical components of TB including its pathogenicity, virulence, transmissibility, drug resistance, epidemiology, evolution, and genetic variability. The Archive will enable evidence-based decision making for diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of TB."

This archive and integrated database will provide early identification of multi-drug resistant strains and enable policy makers to make rapid decisions about potential epidemics on a national scale. The approach is emphasized as a model of how to address the growing need to accelerate the integration science, medicine, and public health.

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About the National Center for Genome Resources (NCGR)

NCGR is a non-profit research institute dedicated to improving human health and nutrition through collaborative research at the intersection of bioscience, computing and mathematics. www.ncgr.org

About Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Part of the Department of Health and Human Services, the CDC's mission is to promote health and quality of life by preventing and controlling disease, injury, and disability. The CDC is the principal US government agency for protecting the health and safety of all Americans and for providing essential human services. www.cdc.gov

About Denver Health and Hospital Authority (DHHA)

DHHA is an integrated, efficient, high-quality health care system whose mission is to provide access to the highest quality health care; provide life-saving emergency medicine and trauma services; fulfill public health functions; provide health education for patients; participate in the education of the next generation of health care professionals; and engage in research. www.dhha.org

About Harvard Medical School (HMS)

The mission of HMS is to create and nurture a community of the best people committed to leadership in alleviating human suffering caused by disease. hms.harvard.edu

About Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH)

The mission of HSPH is to advance the public's health through learning, discovery, and communication. The objectives of HSPH are to provide the highest level of public health education; to foster new discoveries leading to improved health; and to strengthen health capacities for communities to inform policy debate, disseminate information, and increase awareness of public health. www.hsph.harvard.edu

About The Institute for Systems Biology (ISB)

ISB brings together a multidisciplinary group of scholars and scientists in an interactive and collaborative environment, to undertake the new research model called systems biology. www.systemsbiology.org

About New Mexico Department of Health (NMDH)

The mission of NMDH is to promote health and sound health policy, prevent disease and disability, improve health services systems and assure that public health functions and safety net services are available to New Mexicans. www.health.state.nm.us

About University of New Mexico (UNM)

UNM's vision is to offer New Mexicans access to a comprehensive array of high quality educational, research, and service programs; to serve as a significant knowledge resource; and to foster programs of international prominence that will place UNM among America's most distinguished public research universities. www.unm.edu

About World Health Organization (WHO)

The WHO is the United Nations specialized agency for health. WHO's objective is the attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health. www.who.int