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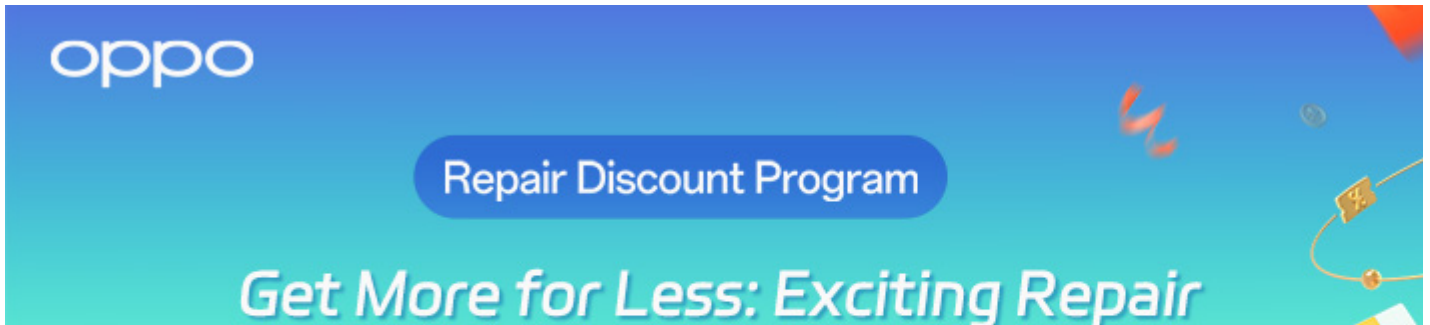
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News / India / Rollout of new regimen for drug-resistant TB: Training set to begin

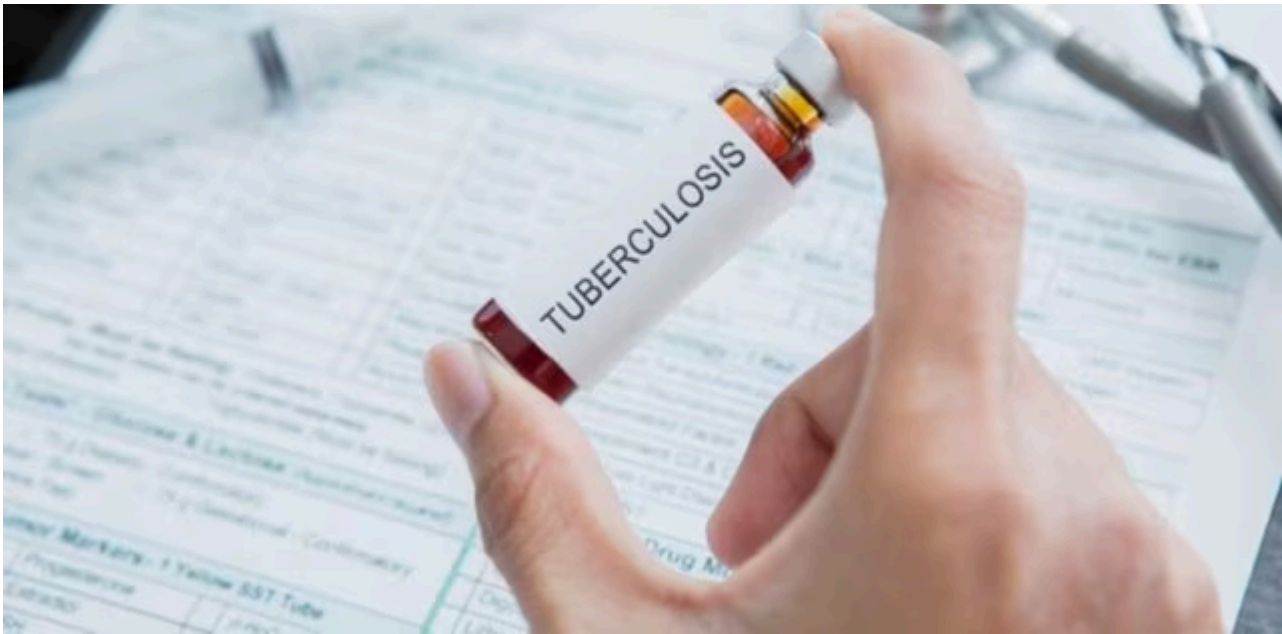
Rollout of new regimen for drug-resistant TB: Training set to begin

While all treatment regimens prevent transmission, this novel treatment also has fewer side effects, making it a pivotal tool in containing and managing TB.

Written by [Anuradha Mascarenhas](#) Follow

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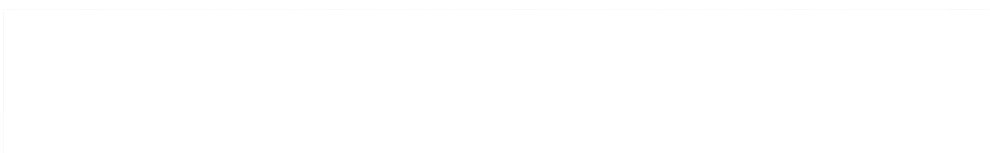
The training will cover monitoring of patients for adverse effects and determining the appropriate line of treatment. (File Photo)

Nearly two years after the WHO recommended the use of the novel BPaLM regimen for drug-resistant tuberculosis — expected to be a game-changer with better treatment outcomes and improved quality of life — India is set to roll out the therapy protocol by training healthcare professionals in administering it.

The training will begin by the end of August or the first week of September, initially in [Mumbai](#) and then at five other locations, senior Health Ministry officials told [The Indian Express](#). “There will be six training sites. Each site will cover 5-6 states,” said Dr Urvashi Singh, Deputy Director General (TB) at the Central TB Division, Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

In its guidelines released in December 2022, the WHO included a new recommendation on the use of an all-oral, six-month regimen composed of bedaquiline, pretomanid, linezolid, and moxifloxacin (BPaLM) for treating multidrug-resistant or rifampicin-resistant tuberculosis (MDR/RR-TB). Currently, TB patients in nearly 40 countries have access to this new regimen, which has proven to be more effective, apart from having a shorter treatment duration of six months compared with the prevailing 18-24 months.

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While all treatment regimens prevent transmission, this novel treatment also has fewer side effects, making it a pivotal tool in containing and managing TB. And India, which accounts for 27% of the global TB cases, stands to benefit significantly.

The new regimen's timely rollout could also give a push to the country's National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP), which aims to eliminate the disease by 2025.



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Dr Soumya Swaminathan, Principal Advisor to the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for NTEP, said, “The Ministry decided to roll out the BPaLM regimen based on encouraging findings from an Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) study.”

“A study coordinated by the ICMR and the National Institute of Research in Tuberculosis, Chennai, has shown over 90% cure rates. Mortality, which is usually 14 to 17%, drops to about 3 to 4%,” she said, highlighting why this drug protocol could be a game-changer in public health management.

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While drugs like bedaquiline, linezolid, and moxifloxacin are already being procured, pretomanid is being sourced under the NTEP. “Rate contracts have been established,” Dr Singh of the Ministry’s Central TB Division said.

Dr Rajesh Solanki, co-chairman of NTEP’s national technical expert group, said: “The (training) sites will likely be in [Maharashtra](#), UP, [Goa](#), [Karnataka](#), and cities of [Kolkata](#) and [Chandigarh](#).”

The training will cover monitoring of patients for adverse effects and determining the appropriate line of treatment. The first to be trained will be state TB officers, medical officers and ‘master trainers’, who will then train others at the district and community levels. This will ensure that chest physicians are well-equipped to prescribe the correct drug regimens.



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Said Dr Singh: “We need to explain the new treatment regimen for drug-resistant tuberculosis clearly. While the newer regimen offers better outcomes, the current regimens are also effective. It is crucial to be cautious during the transition from the previous regimen and to identify where the patient, who is resistant to TB drugs, fits within the spectrum”.