

# Zoonotic Tuberculosis

Third  
Edition



## *Mycobacterium bovis* and Other Pathogenic Mycobacteria

EDITED BY

Charles O. Thoen  
James H. Steele  
John B. Kaneene



WILEY Blackwell



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**Third edition**

Editors

Charles O. Thoen,  
James H. Steele,  
and John B. Kaneene

**WILEY** Blackwell

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# Preface

Tuberculosis (TB), caused by the genus *Mycobacterium*, is a significant health problem in both humans and animals. The traditional picture of human tuberculosis is disease due to *M. tuberculosis* (MTB), which often presents as a chronic pulmonary infection that without treatment can progress to systemic infection and result in death.

Mycobacterial infections outside the respiratory system, or extrapulmonary TB, are documented but often underreported, since the majority of TB diagnostic tests are focused on pulmonary disease due to *M. tuberculosis*. In addition to MTB, *M. bovis* (BTB) is the agent most commonly associated with nonpulmonary TB and is a recognized public health problem in developing countries, where direct contact with livestock reservoir hosts of BTB and consumption of unpasteurized dairy foods and improperly cooked meat are important routes for the zoonotic transmission of BTB from animals to humans.

The primary reservoir host for BTB is domestic cattle; however, BTB has been reported in most mammalian species. It is important to emphasize that other domestic and wild animals have been recognized as potential reservoirs of *M. bovis* for cattle and human infection. The economic costs of BTB, from losses in livestock productivity (e.g., milk, meat, animal mortality) to losses in human productivity due to illness are greater in nonindustrialized countries where BTB control programs are absent or ineffective.

Despite the attention and investment given to address the global TB epidemic due to MTB, and the importance of human BTB infection in nonindustrialized countries, little has changed in understanding the role of BTB in the global TB epidemic in humans. The World Health Organization (WHO) lists BTB as one of seven neglected zoonoses that pose serious threats to public health, and the World Organization for Animal Health (Office International des Epizooties, OIE) has called for the control and eradication of BTB. Global awareness of the importance of BTB infection in humans has increased with the spread of HIV-AIDS: rates of BTB infection in HIV-AIDS patients are higher than those in the general population, and BTB/HIV-AIDS coinfections now constitute the majority of BTB cases in developing countries. Despite this growing awareness, the contribution of BTB to global rates of extrapulmonary TB and overall TB in humans is not well documented and requires additional research.

In order to address challenges associated with BTB in the global strategy to control TB, both human and animal health professionals must work together for effective prevention and control of zoonotic TB. The term *One Health* has been adopted to describe the unified human and veterinary medical approach to zoonoses. United

approaches will be critical for future endeavors in the control of the global TB epidemic. This paradigm is ideally suited for control of BTB, since the epidemiology of BTB varies widely throughout the world, given differences in human, livestock, and wildlife populations; existing TB control programs; and environmental and socioeconomic conditions.

Sharing resources and increasing interaction between public health and veterinary medical scientists can raise awareness of the shared risk of BTB between humans and animals; in resource-limited situations, this method can maximize the use of existing infrastructure and reduce unnecessary duplication of effort in disease control programs. Shared research between human and animal health can speed the development of new diagnostic tools, potential novel vaccines for humans and livestock, and improved TB surveillance, control, and eradication programs.

*Mycobacterium bovis* BCG vaccines have been widely used in humans in high-burden countries. Although there is a long-standing debate whether they provide any protection against the adult form of TB, they do appear to provide some protection against disseminated TB and TB meningitis in children. BCG vaccines are not utilized in animals as they fail to protect against infection, and their ability to prevent progression to disease is uncertain. It is important to remember that when vaccine failures occur in humans, the patient presents for treatment, but animals with clinical disease that are contagious remain in the population and are reservoirs of infection for other animals. Therefore, vaccines for animals must be highly efficacious to be of practical value in the control of tuberculosis.

It is the purpose of this text to provide physicians, veterinarians, public health workers, allied health scientists, biomedical research workers, diagnosticians, and graduate students with current information on the significance of *M. bovis* in the elimination of TB in animals and humans. Updated information is presented on new molecular techniques utilized in identification of members of the *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* complex as well as application of molecular techniques useful in tracing outbreaks of tuberculosis.

This edition has added a new chapter describing how the One Health approach can be used for the prevention and control of TB in animals and humans and includes current updates on the status of *M. bovis* infection in animals and humans in industrialized and developing countries of the world. Six new chapters on the importance of zoonotic tuberculosis in countries in Africa are included. Utilization of One Health principles for interdisciplinary collaborations offers a valuable approach for all global regions.

This modernized information is and will be of significant value to public health officials, research workers, allied health scientists, state and federal regulatory veterinarians, medical and veterinary medical practitioners, and professionals interested in the importation of animals for herds and for collections of endangered species in zoos and animal parks.

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The findings and conclusions in this book are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



# Zoonotic Tuberculosis



# Chapter 1

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## Tuberculosis in animals and humans

### An introduction

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Tuberculosis is an important disease in animals and humans worldwide. It causes substantial morbidity, mortality, and economic loss. There is significant variation in terms of how different organisms of the *M. tuberculosis* complex affect specific animals, including humans. However, there are also important intersections between animals and humans with regard to TB. The best example is the occurrence of *M. bovis* disease in humans and domesticated and wild animals.

The tubercle bacillus infects an estimated 2 billion persons or approximately one third of the world's population, and it is estimated that 1.5 to 2 million people die from TB each year. Ninety-five percent of cases occur in people in developing countries. TB is one of the leading causes of infectious disease-related deaths worldwide [1]. The genus *Mycobacterium* includes several species that cause TB disease in humans and other animals. The *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* complex includes *M. tuberculosis*, *M. cannetii*, *M. africanum*, *M. bovis*, *M. pinnipedii*, *M. mungi*, *M. caprae*, and *M. microti*.

Significant progress has been made toward the elimination of TB caused by *M. tuberculosis* complex from humans in industrialized countries [2]. However, in many countries where TB programs have only recently been established, there has been only limited progress toward control of the disease. The development of drug-resistant (multidrug-resistant and extensively drug-resistant) strains has compromised the efficacy of TB treatment in humans and has markedly increased the cost associated with the use of multiple drug therapies [3]. Moreover, the susceptibility of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)-infected individuals to *M. tuberculosis* complex is of major concern to public health officials in developing countries where the acquired immune-deficiency syndrome is rampant [4].

*M. bovis* accounts for only a small percentage of the reported cases of TB in humans; however, it is a pathogen of significant economic importance in wild and domestic animals

around the globe, especially in countries where little information is available on the incidence of *M. bovis* infection in humans [5–7].

Tubercle bacilli were identified more than 130 years ago. However, a definitive understanding of the pathogenesis of the disease caused by the *M. tuberculosis* complex is deficient [8,9]. The tubercle bacillus enters the macrophage by binding to cell surface molecules of the phagocyte. Ingestion of the tubercle bacillus by phagocytes into the phagosome or intracytoplasmic vacuole protects the organism from the natural defenses in the serum. Following ingestion of the bacillus, lysosomes fuse with the phagosome to form phagolysosomes, and it is there that the phagocytes attempt to destroy the bacillus [10]. However, virulent bacilli have the ability to escape killing. Virulent mycobacteria survive inside a mononuclear phagocyte by inhibiting phagosome fusion with preformed lysosomes, thereby limiting acidification. It has been suggested that the pathogenicity of *M. tuberculosis* complex is a multifactorial phenomenon. However, in cases in which the host response is unable to destroy the bacillus due to conditions that compromise immune function, resulting in low CD4+ T-cell counts, such as immune suppression due to chemotherapy, stress, or HIV, reactivation may occur, resulting in the release of bacilli and transmission of infection.

The susceptibility of different host species varies for the *M. tuberculosis* complex, depending on the route of exposure, the dose of organisms, and the virulence of the strain [11]. Humans, nonhuman primates, and guinea pigs are very susceptible to *M. tuberculosis*. Cattle, rabbits, and cats are susceptible to *M. bovis* and are quite resistant to *M. tuberculosis*. Wild hoofed stock is generally susceptible to *M. bovis*, but few reports are available on the isolation of *M. tuberculosis* [12–14]. Swine and dogs are susceptible to both *M. bovis* and *M. tuberculosis* [15].

In humans, TB is a pulmonary and systemic disease caused by *M. tuberculosis* complex species, predominantly *M. tuberculosis*. TB infections occur when susceptible individuals inhale droplet nuclei containing tubercle bacilli and the droplet nuclei reach the alveoli of the lungs. The tubercle bacilli that reach the alveoli are ingested by alveolar macrophages and the majority of these bacilli are destroyed or inhibited. A small number multiply intracellularly and are released when the macrophages die. If alive, these bacilli may spread through the lymph or bloodstream to more distant tissues and organs, including areas in which TB disease is most likely to develop: the apices of the lungs, the kidneys, the brain, the bones, and through the lymphatic system to regional lymph nodes. This process of dissemination primes the immune system for systemic responses.

Because of the primed immune system, extracellular bacilli attract macrophages and other immunologically active cells. The immune response kills most of the bacilli, and the remaining bacilli are confined through the formation of granulomas. At this point, latent TB infection (LTBI) has been established, which may be detected using the Mantoux tuberculin skin test or interferon-gamma release assays. Within weeks after infection, the immune system is usually able to halt the multiplication of the tubercle bacilli, preventing further progression.

In some people, the tubercle bacilli overcome the defenses of the immune system and begin to multiply, resulting in the progression from LTBI to TB disease. This process may occur soon after or many years after infection. Unless treated, approximately 3%–5% of persons who have been infected with *M. tuberculosis* will develop TB disease in the first



2 years after infection, and another 2%–5% will develop disease at some time later in life. Thus, approximately 5%–10% of persons with normal immune systems who are infected with *M. tuberculosis* will develop TB disease at some point in their lives. Immunocompromised persons have a much higher risk of progression from infection to disease. For example, HIV-infected persons not receiving antiretroviral therapy have an 8% annual risk of progression [16].

TB continues to be an important disease both in humans and animals. It causes substantial morbidity, mortality, and economic loss worldwide. There is significant variation in terms of how different organisms of the *M. tuberculosis* complex affect specific animals, including humans. However, there are also important intersections between animals and humans with regard to TB. Perhaps the best example is the occurrence of *M. bovis* disease in humans and domesticated and wild animals.

*M. bovis* persists in humans, causing pulmonary and extrapulmonary disease. Unlike transmission of *M. bovis* from cattle to humans, the role of human-to-human airborne transmission in the spread of *M. bovis* has been somewhat controversial [17]; the predominant view has been that human-to-human transmission is a rare event and that it is only likely to occur in populations that are particularly susceptible to TB (e.g., HIV-infected persons). However, reports of clusters of cases with social and molecular epidemiologic links with patients with pulmonary *M. bovis* have suggested that human-to-human transmission does occur, even in nonimmunosuppressed persons [18].

Investigations are needed to elucidate the relative importance of *M. bovis* as regards TB incidence in humans, especially in developing countries [1]. Efforts should be concentrated in countries where HIV infection is widespread, as HIV-infected individuals are more susceptible to mycobacterial disease. Eradication of *M. bovis* in cattle and pasteurization of dairy products are the cornerstones of the prevention of human disease [19]. Standard public health measures used to manage patients with contagious *M. tuberculosis* should be applied to contagious patients with *M. bovis* to stop person-to-person spread. Finally, measures should be developed to identify and control *M. bovis* infection in wild animals, as these animals may be important reservoirs of infection for domesticated food-producing animals.

It is important to emphasize that pathogenic tubercle bacilli have a wide host range; several species of the genus *Mycobacterium* infect humans as well as wild and domestic animals. There is therefore a need for medical and veterinary medical professionals to cooperate in disease outbreaks [20]. This concept has been promoted previously [21]. However, this is of increasing importance in TB control in the twenty-first century because of the occurrence of drug-resistant *M. tuberculosis* complex strains and the immunosuppression of host responses from multiple causes, resulting in increased susceptibility to tubercle bacilli.

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## Note

This chapter was originally printed in part as the first of an educational series on *Mycobacterium bovis* as a zoonotic disease and its implications for tuberculosis control in human populations. This series was offered as a reminder that tuberculosis is a disease with an animal reservoir and that therefore ultimate eradication must recognize this animal reservoir and incorporate strategies to deal with it in the global strategy for the control and elimination of tuberculosis in humans. We believe that this has been neglected in the current strategy and needs to be acknowledged and incorporated, however minimally, in future revisions of the global strategy.

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## Chapter 2

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# One Health approach for preventing and controlling tuberculosis in animals and humans

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The term *One Health*, previously referred to as *One Medicine* in the 20th century, is now used to describe the unified human and veterinary approach to zoonoses [1,2]. Part of the unified human and veterinary medical approach of One Health is a worldwide strategy for expanding coequal, all-inclusive multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary collaborations and communications directed to the development of disease control and prevention programs, as well as biomedical clinical research investigations. Understanding the effects of zoonoses on socioeconomic well-being; addressing social, cultural, and economic conditions that facilitate spread and maintenance of disease; and development of programs with active stakeholder input and participation are critical to the success of One Health [3,4]. In addition, utilization of the One Health approach currently has (and will in the future) expanded the scientific knowledge base, improved medical education and clinical care, and developed effective disease control programs in both human and animal populations, resulting in the protection and saving of untold millions of lives today and in future generations.

## History of the One Health approach

Associations between animal and human diseases have been observed in ancient civilizations to the present [5]. Parallels in the progression of disease between humans and domestic animals, and the historic use of animals as sentinels for human disease [6], acknowledge these associations. The evidence of “shared risk” in humans and animals in recent history include Minamata disease (mercury poisoning in humans and cats), anthrax

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in livestock and humans, and West Nile virus in humans and animals [6]. Further, studies of human and animal ethnopharmacology have found commonality in the descriptions, symptoms, and treatments for humans and animals in traditional medicine, as well as the fact that many remedies were used to treat both humans and animals [7].

Some of the earliest applications of the concept of associations between human and animal disease were prompted by veterinarians in the United States. Dr. J. Law, a professor of veterinary medicine at Cornell University, advised the U.S. Board of Health on the effects of zoonoses on public health in 1880 [5]. The focus of early proponents of veterinary public health impacting human public health involved hazards of milk from diseased cows in the 1880s, from diseases including tuberculosis (TB), typhoid fever, diphtheria, and brucellosis [5]. Actions to control milk-borne diseases included pasteurization after production and control of bovine TB and brucellosis in cattle through Grade A milk requirements for cattle herd health status [5]. The success of this program has resulted in the near eradication of these diseases as foodborne hazards in the United States.

## **Acceptance of the One Health approach**

In the first decade of the 21st century, the One Health concept was promoted by the veterinary medical community through the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) [5,8], which established a unique One Health collaborative liaison with the American Medical Association (AMA) in 2006. In 2007, the AMA passed a landmark One Health resolution, and the AVMA officially established the One Health Initiative Task Force (OHITF) to develop strategies to enhance collaboration between human and veterinary medical professionals. The OHITF produced a strategic framework for reducing risks of infectious diseases at the human-animal-ecosystem interface, and developed the recommendations that formed the bases of the current One Health Initiative [9]. As a result, the One Health Commission (OHC) was officially chartered in 2009 for the wide spectrum purpose of promoting One Health in the United States and worldwide.

After support of the One Health concept by the AVMA, AMA, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the American Society for Microbiology, it has been embraced by the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (Office International des Epizooties—OIE), the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UNICEF, the United Nations System Influenza Coordination, and the World Bank. The World Bank has specifically recognized the importance of One Health and its economic benefits [10, 11]. Other major organizations promoting One Health include the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the U.S. National Environmental Health Association (NEHA), the European Union, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and many others. Recognition of the importance of One Health has also expanded beyond the medical and economic sciences: in the United States, The National League of Cities has formally recognized and supported the work of the OHITF and has acknowledged how the success of the One Health Initiative will rely on leadership, communication skills, and cooperation.

One Health is now being embraced by many different countries to address different zoonotic diseases, and One Health principles are an important part of global health training