

# TUBERCULOSIS IN JAPAN

## What is TB?

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

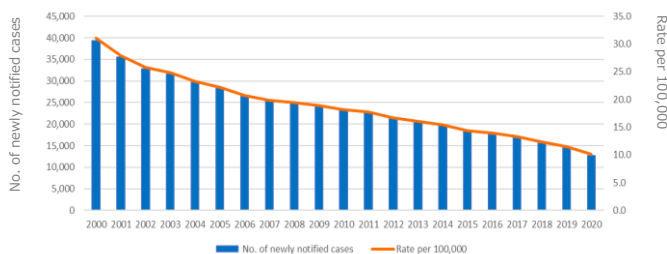
TB usually attacks the lungs, but it can also damage any part of the body, such as the lymph nodes, pleura, brain, kidneys, or spine. TB is curable and preventable, but a person with TB can die without treatment.

The symptoms of TB disease of the lungs include cough, chest pain, and sputum expectoration with or without 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 **12,739 persons** with active TB disease were newly notified in Japan in 2020 (10.1 cases per 100,000 population). Both the number of newly notified TB patients and rates per 100,000 have continued to decline (Figure 1). The global epidemic of Covid-19, which began in January 2020, has had a significant impact on the epidemiology of TB also in Japan.

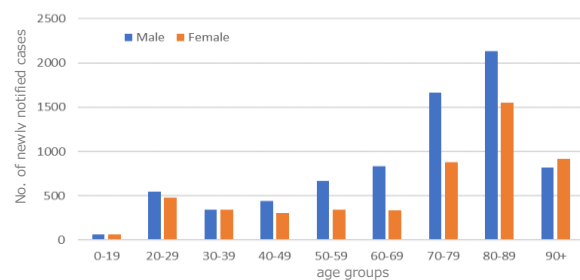
**Figure 1. Number and notification rate per 100,000 population, 2000-2020**



## Sex and age distribution

In 2020, 58.9% of the notified TB patients were males. 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, 2020 n=12,739**



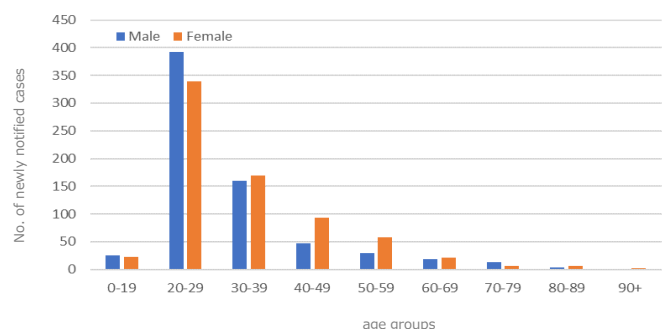
## TB among the foreign-born

Information regarding place of birth (Japan-born or foreign-born) was known for 98.1% of the newly notified TB patients (12,491 / 12,739) in 2020. Of those, 11.1% was born outside Japan (n=1,411).

The number of foreign-born patients decreased by 130 from 1,541 (2019) to 1,411 (2020). However, the proportion of foreign-born patients was 11.1%, up from 10.7% of the previous year.

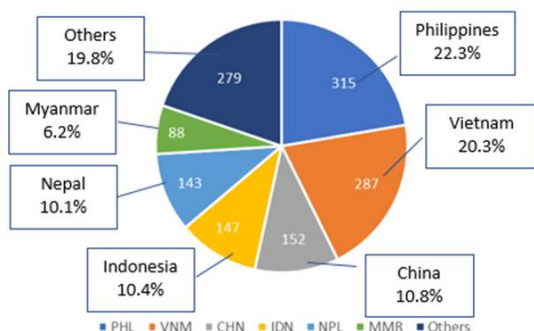
The largest number of foreign-born TB patients were diagnosed among those aged 20 to 29 years old (n=732), followed by those aged 30-39 years old (n=330). The proportion of foreign-born of the total newly notified TB patients was higher among the younger age group, with the proportion reaching 71.3% among those aged 20-29 years old (Figure 3).

**Figure 3. Foreign-born TB patients by age and sex, 2020 n=1,411**



The Philippines was the most frequent countries of birth for foreign-born TB patients reported in 2020 (n=315), followed by Vietnam (n=287), China (n=152), Indonesia (n=147), Nepal (n=143), and Myanmar (n=88) (Figure 4).

**Figure 4. Foreign-born TB proportion by county of birth, 2020 n=1,411**



## MDR-TB

Multidrug-resistant (MDR) TB is a TB disease that is resistant to at least isoniazid and rifampicin. MDR-TB accounted for 0.9% of culture confirmed pulmonary TB cases with known drug susceptibility test results (46 / 5,209).

Proportions of those with resistance for INH, for RFP, and MDR were higher among retreatment than new cases.

## HIV/TB

HIV is a significant risk factor for TB disease. In 2020, HIV test results were known only for 6.9% (877 / 12,739) of the newly notified TB patients. Of those 877 patients with known test results, 31 (3.5%) were HIV positive and 846 (96.5%) were HIV negative.

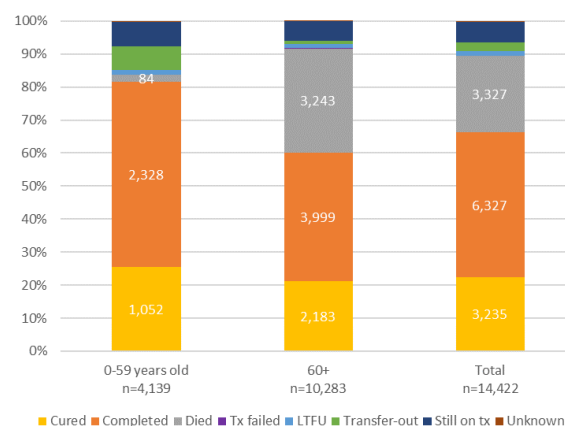
## Latent TB Infection

Persons with latent TB infection do not have active TB disease and therefore do not present with any symptoms. About 5 to 10 percent of infected persons without treatment is estimated to develop active TB disease at some time in their lives. A total of 5,575 persons with latent TB infection were newly notified in 2020 in Japan.

## Treatment outcome

Treatment of TB disease requires multiple drugs that needs to be taken at least for six to nine months. Among 14,460 TB patients notified in 2019, treatment outcome was available for 14,422 patients (99.7%). Among those, 66.3% (n=9,562) successfully completed the treatment and 23.1% (n=3,327) died during treatment due to any cause. This high mortality rate is due to the high proportion of elderly TB patients in Japan (Figure 5). In fact, the 81.7% of patients aged under 60 years old successfully completed the treatment.

**Figure 5. Treatment outcomes by age, 2019, n=14,422**



All data in the factsheet is based on the statistics published in The Tuberculosis Surveillance Center <https://jata-ekigaku.jp/>

The annual report of tuberculosis in Japan in 2021 will be also available soon.

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Published in October 2021