

CDC: Decline in TB rates in the united states slowing down

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Doctor inspects patient's lung X-ray for signs of TB.
Photo: U.S. Agency for International Development

(HealthDay)—As health officials in Kansas struggle with an outbreak of tuberculosis (TB) at a local high school, federal officials reported Thursday that the annual decline in U.S. cases is slowing. The report was published in the March 20 issue of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

According to the report, in 2014, there were 9,412 TB cases in the United States, a rate of three cases per 100,000 people. That's 2.2 percent lower than the TB rate in 2013. However, "this decline in the rate of TB was the smallest decrease in more than a decade and suggests

the need for ongoing evaluation of TB elimination strategies overall and within high-risk populations," the CDC researchers write. TB is more common in certain groups, particularly foreign-born people, who have a TB rate 13.4 times higher than those born in the United States.

Compared to whites, the TB rate is 28.5 times higher among Asians and eight times higher among blacks and Hispanics.

Last week, more than 300 students and staff at Olathe Northwest High School in Kansas were tested after a reported case of TB at the school. The testing identified 27 more cases of TB. Another round of tests will be offered in early May for those possibly exposed.

The consequences of TB can be devastating, especially for people with multidrug-resistant or extensively drug-resistant TB, the CDC researchers said. Multidrug-resistant TB accounted for 1.3 percent (96 cases) of all TB cases in the United States in 2013. There was one case of extensively drug-resistant TB in 2014.

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