

- ◆ Most tuberculosis patients are young adults in their most productive years.

### **What progress has been made in controlling tuberculosis in the Americas?**

- ◆ 78% of the population of the Americas benefits from the DOTS strategy.
- ◆ During 2003, 76% of patients with contagious tuberculosis were diagnosed, and 81% of these were cured.

### **What are the warning signs of tuberculosis?**

If you have a cough that lasts more than 2 weeks, regardless of your age, you may have tuberculosis, and should seek medical attention right away. The staff at your local health clinic will be willing to assist you.

Early detection of tuberculosis is important. Protect your own health and that of your loved ones.

**Curing one patient protects the entire community**

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March 24  
**World  Day**

**Health Care Providers  
Heroes in the fight against tuberculosis**



**Pan American  
Health  
Organization**

*Regional Office of the  
World Health Organization*

## HEALTH WORKERS:

### Heroes in the fight against tuberculosis



**O**n March 24, 1882, the German physician Robert Koch announced to the world that he had discovered the germ causing tuberculosis, *Koch's bacillus*. In commemoration of this discovery, March 24 is celebrated each year as "World TB Day."

Koch's discovery and subsequent study of the bacillus have led to important advances in tuberculosis prevention and treatment. However, these scientific advances have not been sufficient to control the disease.

In 1994, the region of the Americas launched the DOTS strategy, an effective, low-cost strategy that makes it possible to detect and cure cases of tuberculosis. The strategy, which has widespread political support, is based on laboratory diagnosis and directly observed treatment. What has made the DOTS strategy a success is the commitment and effort of health workers.

This year's World TB Day is dedicated to health workers, the true heroes in the fight against tuberculosis.

## HEALTH WORKERS

### How do they fight tuberculosis?

1. They diagnosis people who suffer from tuberculosis.
2. They ensure correct treatment by directly observing patients as they take their medication.
3. They provide education about tuberculosis to patients and their families.
4. They carry out activities to promote and protect health for TB patients, their families, and their communities.
5. They receive continuous training to support these activities and provide better care.

### Tuberculosis in the Americas\*

- ◆ Some 370,000 patients are diagnosed with tuberculosis every year, or 1,013 people every day.
- ◆ Of these patients, nearly 200,000 are contagious, making diagnosis and treatment a top priority.
- ◆ More than 150 people die daily because of tuberculosis.
- ◆ For each 8 men with tuberculosis, there are 5 women with the disease



\* Source: Global Tuberculosis Report, WHO, 2005. Data compiled from the year 2003.