

Headline	New treatment regimen for TB		
MediaTitle	Malay Mail		
Date	21 Mar 2012	Color	Black/white
Section	World	Circulation	20,816
Page No	36	Readership	49,000
Language	English	ArticleSize	140 cm ²
Journalist	N/A	AdValue	RM 1,163
Frequency	Daily	PR Value	RM 3,489



WASHINGTON

New treatment regimen for TB

A GLOBAL health alliance yesterday unveiled plans for the first clinical tests of a new treatment regimen for tuberculosis, including for patients with resistance to existing multidrug programmes.

The TB Alliance, which is funded by several governments and foundations, said the new drug combination offers promise in the fight against TB, which kills an estimated 1.4 million people each year, mostly in Africa.

Health experts said the new programme could be particularly useful for an estimated 650,000 people around the world who suffer from multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB), a number expected to rise, and could shorten treatment times.

“There is new momentum and new hope in TB research, as shown by this and several

other novel regimen trials that will soon be launched,” said Mel Spigelman, president and chief executive of the TB Alliance.

“This novel TB drug regimen has the potential to unlock a new and more efficient approach to tackling TB.

Currently, someone with TB must take a course of drugs daily for six months, while those with MDR-TB must take a daily injection for the first six months and a dozen or more pills each day for 18 months or more.

Many TB patients fail to complete treatment because they cannot tolerate the difficult side effects of the medications or cannot adhere to the long-term treatment, according to the TB Alliance.

This leads to drug resistant forms of the disease, or even extensively drug-resistant

TB known as XDR-TB.

“The current TB treatment takes too long, and all around the world, patients needlessly suffer because today’s treatment is completely inadequate,” said Francis George Apina of the Network of Men Living with HIV/AIDS in Kenya.

The TB Alliance receives funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Irish Aid, Britain’s Department for International Development, the US Agency for International Development, and the US Food and Drug Administration.

The new regimen tested could shorten required treatment to as little as four months in both patients with TB and some forms of drug-resistant TB, compared with the current six to 24 months. Costs will also be vastly reduced. — AFP