



HIV+ people provide insights into the fight against TB

HIV+ people who are exposed to TB and do not develop disease could be the key to unlocking effective TB prevention and treatment strategies.

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People who are living with HIV are at greater risk of developing tuberculosis (TB). Even while fulfilling day-to-day activities, these people are at risk of being exposed to and infected with *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (Mtb).

Since the COVID-19 pandemic started, the burden of TB has increased as clinic visits have decreased. This makes it crucial that effective TB prevention strategies are found. For this to happen, a greater understanding of how some people are able to

control Mtb infection better than others is needed.

Researchers at Stellenbosch University and the University of Cape Town have teamed up with leading international researchers at McGill University, Canada. They have identified persons living with HIV who do not develop TB despite multiple exposures in Cape Town, South Africa.

“Understanding the genetic and immunological differences in these people will help us to develop more tailored TB prevention and treatment

modalities,” says Dr Elouise Kroon.

The researchers are focusing on key immune cells such as neutrophils, which are providing vital insights into how the immune system can control Mtb.

“If we fail to develop a vaccine or other TB prevention strategies, we run the risk of this disease continuing to increase the financial and emotional burden on already impoverished nations.”

HIV+ people who do not develop TB could help develop more tailored TB prevention strategies.



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