

# Tuberculosis: Are we anywhere close to eliminating it?

**Asmah Binti Razali**

Head (TB and Leprosy Control Sector) Disease Control Division, Ministry of Health, Malaysia

## **ABSTRACT**

**Summary:** Tuberculosis (TB) remains the world's leading infectious killer and a quarter of the world's population is estimated to be infected with TB bacilli. WHO estimated each year 10 million people fell ill with TB disease and 1.5 million die from TB globally. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected TB services in Malaysia, in which TB notification rates reduced 10% between 2019 and 2020 and TB death increased by 5%. Various outreach activities, virtual consultation on Direct Observed Treatment (DOT) were practiced since the beginning of pandemic and concurrent testing for TB and COVID-19 were advocated. As for 2021, Malaysia is classified as a country with upper moderate burden with notification rate of TB was 64 per 100,000 population. The focus of National TB Programme is to increase case detection of TB, ensure treatment given effectively until patient is cured or completed treatment and reduce the occurrence of drug resistant TB. Global targets for reductions in the burden of TB disease have been set as part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the World Health Organization's (WHO's) End TB Strategy. The 2035 targets set in the End TB Strategy are 95% reduction in TB deaths and 90% reduction in the TB incidence rate, compared with 2015 achievement. To realize the End TB Strategy target 2035, Malaysia need to scale up rapid and early diagnosis of TB to reduce transmission; expand patient-centered care by moving it nearer to patients and their families for treatment efficient, enhance TB preventive therapy (TPT) to prevent development of TB active in the high risk groups, to boost intersectoral approaches to address inequities and active involvement of civil society organizations to reduce TB stigma, discrimination and enhance support to TB patients and their families.