

1690. Opportunities for Improved Detection and Treatment of Latent Tuberculosis Infection Among Veterans — Western United States, January 2010–July 2013

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Background. The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) previously estimated that tuberculosis (TB) incidence among Veterans was over twice that for the U.S. population overall. Treatment of latent tuberculosis infection (LTBI) decreases progression to TB by approximately 90% among adherent persons. We describe characteristics of Veterans with TB and their previous screening and treatment for LTBI.

Methods. We queried VHA infection control practitioners and QC PathFinder, VHA's infection surveillance application, to identify Veterans with TB (confirmed

by laboratory, clinical, or provider diagnosis criteria), diagnosed or treated during January 1, 2010–July 31, 2013 and evaluated for symptoms or signs of TB at 31 VHA facilities in the western United States. We reviewed VHA electronic medical records for TB risk factors and prior LTBI screening by tuberculin skin test or interferon-gamma release assay.

Results. We identified 113 Veterans with TB in the western United States; 110 (97%) of whom were men. The median age was 61 years (range: 30–91 years). Among 109 with known race or ethnicity and national origin, 31 (28%) were foreign-born, including 21 (68%) from the Philippines and 5 (16%) from Guam. Fifty-four (50%) were non-Hispanic white; 24 (22%) were Asian; 16 (15%) were black; 7 (6%) were Hispanic; 5 (5%) were Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and 3 (3%) were American Indian or Alaska Native. Among 107 not previously treated for TB, 90 (84%) had risk factors, 61 (68%) of whom reported or had VHA-documented screening. Of 42 diagnosed with LTBI, only 18 (43%) had initiated and 13 (31%) completed LTBI treatment.

Conclusion. TB could have been prevented in some Veterans by targeted testing and treatment of LTBI per current guidelines. Investigating reasons certain Veterans with TB risk factors are not screened and others with LTBI are not treated may help tailor prevention efforts.

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