

## Fewer TB deaths in India: WHO

India's share in the number of TB deaths still remain high at 32%.G.  
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Death from tuberculosis in India saw a 12% decline from last year and the number of new cases, or incidence, saw a 1.7% decrease, according to a report from the World Health Organisation (WHO) on Monday.

With 1.7 million new cases in 2016, India continued to be the largest contributor to the global burden with up to a quarter of the 6.3 million new cases of TB (up from 6.1 million in 2015).

In spite of this year's dip, India accounts for about 32% of the number of people worldwide who succumbed to the disease.

### Rise in cases

Sunil Khaparde, who leads India's tuberculosis-control programme, said the rise in cases was due to greater surveillance and the dip in mortality from 480,000 to 423,000 in 2016, due to improved drug management.

"Since last year, we've scaled up the use of molecular diagnostic tests to detect the infection...even on detection of drug-resistant TB there's been an improvement," he told *The Hindu*.

Globally, the TB mortality rate is falling at about 3% per year. TB incidence is falling at about 2% per year and 16% of TB cases die from the disease, according to the WHO.

"Overall, the latest picture is one of a still high burden of disease, and progress that is not fast enough to reach targets or to make major headway in closing persistent gaps," the agency added in a summary to the report.

The government has committed to achieve a '90-90-90 target' by 2035 (90% reductions in incidence, mortality and catastrophic health expenditures due to TB).

This is premised on improved diagnostics, shorter treatment courses, a better vaccine and comprehensive preventive strategies.

In 2016, the WHO said that India had many more deaths and incidence of the disease than had been estimated over the years.

***This article has been corrected for a factual error.***

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