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## Tuberculosis screening among female health sciences students in Jeddah (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia)

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**Background & Objectives:** The aim of this study was to assess the prevalence of reactivity to Mantoux test (TST) in health sciences students after an open case of TB infection detected in one of the students. Our specific aim was to identify protective tools and health services for the students towards TB infections.

**Setting & Design:** A cross sectional screening survey was carried out for students of the Health Sciences College. 320 female students were screened using a standardized Mantoux test, and a physical examination to inspect BCG scars on students' arms. We planned to give healthcare services after the screening survey to students with positive Mantoux test.

**Results:** Findings of this screening survey highlight the importance of TB infection in healthcare students who are in direct contact with TB patients. From 320, only 296 (92.5%) students participated in the survey. Thirty five (12%) of students had positive Mantoux test reactivity ( $\geq 10$  mm). Two hundred and twenty (74.3%) students had a BCG vaccination scar, while 76 (25.7%) had no BCG vaccination scar. Relationship was significant between test reactivity and BCG scar. There is a strong relationship between college departments and TST results.

**Conclusions:** Infection with TB was high among students considering Mantoux TST as a primary diagnostic method for latent *Mycobacterium Tuberculosis*. Strengthening infection control measures is strongly recommended to prevent TB infection during students' health care training. An important finding done outside the actual study is the unsatisfactory services provided to the TB positive students that were referred (lack of investigation and assessments). Further studies are therefore recommended to assess the adherence and knowledge of health professionals managing clients in the TB centers.

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