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Rapid molecular detection of rifampin resistant tuberculosis in Basrah Governorate – South of Iraq

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ABSTRACT

Background: The problem of high incidence and prevalence rates of tuberculosis (TB) in Iraq is an issue of concern to the national health authorities and international parties, WHO and UNDP. Tremendous efforts have been made in Iraq to control the problem. However, progress is very slow in controlling it. One of the major obstacles that stand against the eradication of this disease is the multiple drug resistance in TB patients.

Aim: The current study was carried out to quantify this factor in tuberculous patients in Basrah Province, the capital of the south of Iraq.

Method: A total of 2246 presumptive TB patients were referred to and examined at the Respiratory and Chest Disease Centre, the only health center that deals with this health problem in the Province. Infected persons were investigated for Rifampicin resistance using the GeneXpert test.

Results: It has been found that about 26% of the examined presumptive patients were tuberculous. Out of those, about 2.9% were found to be Rifampicin resistant.

Conclusions: The present study emphasizes the high incidence and prevalence rates of TB in Iraq. The use of modern techniques in the identification of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* resistance to antibiotics is a very important necessity, in particular molecular detection using the GeneXpert device given that it is faster and more sensitive compared with other methods.

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