

Could primary healthcare help curb TB at mines?

Seventy percent of tuberculosis cases among miners go undiagnosed, which puts families and communities at risk. The risk also spreads across borders, with 40% of mine workers coming from neighbouring countries to work on SA mines.



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A recent article explores the reported implications of mine-linked air pollution on a Mpumalanga coal town.

Residents of the region report continuous health concerns including tuberculosis, though nothing conclusive has been found.

The incident forms part of a larger question on whether the mining sector is doing enough to mitigate tuberculosis.

Martin Neethling, head: Sanlam Health Insurance and Distribution, says the benefits of affordable access to on-site primary healthcare could greatly assist to curb the epidemic.

Heidi Albert, Head of the Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics (FIND) in SA, elaborates on this epidemic. She references a World Bank report that tuberculosis rates within the mining workforce are estimated at 2 500 to 3 000 cases per 100 000 individuals – an incidence that's ten times higher than the World Health Organisation's threshold for a health emergency, and three times the general population's incidence rate, which is the third highest incidence rate in the world.

Albert says that according to the World Bank, 70% of tuberculosis cases among miners go undiagnosed, which puts families and communities at risk. The risk also spreads across borders, with 40% of mine workers coming from neighbouring countries to work on SA mines.

The mining sector has taken positive steps to improve living conditions and digitally screen for illness regularly, which has resulted in a decline in reported cases, but there's more to be done from a primary healthcare perspective.

Read the [full article](#)

Source: Mining Review Africa

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