

TUBERCULOSIS IN NEW YORK CITY

1991

Information Summary



Bureau of Tuberculosis Control
New York City Department of Health

New York City continues to have one of the highest case rates of tuberculosis in the country. This report presents the demographic and geographic distribution of tuberculosis cases reported and confirmed in New York City in 1991. Rate calculations of cases per 100,000 population are based upon 1990 census data.*

Tuberculosis cases in New York City continued their increasing trend in 1991. Case rates have been rising since 1979 and are now 50.2 per 100,000 population (Table 1, Figures 1 and 2). In 1991 there were 3,673 new cases of tuberculosis reported in the City. This incidence represents a 4.3% annual increase over the 3,520 cases reported in 1990, and a 143% increase over 1980, when 1,514 cases were reported. The 1991 case rate is the highest in two decades (Table 1). This rate is about five times the national case rate of 10.4, and in 1991 New York City accounted for 14% of the nation's 26,283 reported tuberculosis cases.

The unabated high incidence of disease in adults aged 25-44 (Table 2, Figure 3) remains of special concern, in part because these individuals are of child rearing age. In 1991, tuberculosis cases among children under 15 years old rose to 159, an increase of 115% from the 74 children reported in 1989.

*This report uses the 1990 Census to calculate case rates. Therefore, numbers of TB cases will be used to discuss the differences between 1991 and 1990; in 1990, the 1980 census was used to determine rates per 100,000 population.

Population differences between the 1980 and 1990 census

As can be seen in Table 3, there was an increase in population of all racial/ethnic groups except non-Hispanic whites. The largest population increase was among Asians (77.3%) with a doubling of that population in the 35-64 age group. Hispanics had the second highest increase in population (26.9%). This increase was most apparent in persons more than 25 years old, with the 65+ age group increasing by 65.4%. Census-enumerated non-Hispanic blacks increased by 9.2% as a whole, with decreases in the 10-19 year old group and the largest increase (30.2%) in the oldest age group. Non-Hispanics whites decreased 14.7%, with decreases in all age categories except those 35-44 years old; in this age group the recorded population increased 25.8% in the decade.

Age Distribution

In 1991 there were 159 TB cases reported in children younger than 15 years, an increase of 115% over the 74 cases reported in 1989. There was a 3.8% decrease in incidence among 25-34 year olds, while those 35-44 showed a 13.5% increase. Cases among those aged 45 and older increased slightly (3.3%).

The continuing increase in cases among children under 15 years old is of particular concern. Among those aged 0 to 5 years (Table 4), non-Hispanic black children represented 62 of the 111 cases (55.9%). A similar proportion of black adults are represented in the adult TB cases. Males represented 57.6% of children; males represent a higher proportion of adult cases.

Ethnic/Racial Distribution of Tuberculosis Cases

Non-Hispanic blacks (males and females) represented 56.4% of all cases (Table 2). Their case rate of 112.2 per 100,000 was the highest of any racial/ethnic group. Hispanics represented 25.4% of all cases and had a case rate of 52.3 per 100,000. Blacks and Hispanics together represent more than 80% of tuberculosis cases reported in the City (Figure 4), as they have since at least 1984 (Figure 5).

The case rate of non-Hispanic white New Yorkers remained the lowest of all racial/ethnic groups, even though the rate of 13.2 per 100,000 population is higher than the national average of 10.4 and represents a 5.3% increase in active cases since 1990. Asians had the largest increase in cases (55.6%) over 1990 of any racial/ethnic group. Their case rate of 46.9 per 100,000 approximates that of Hispanics. As seen in Figure 6, the age peak between 25-44 years was highest for Blacks and Hispanics, whereas Asians had higher case rates in the older ages. Asian males 65 years and older had a case rate of 226.9 per 100,000, which is higher than that in any other non-black age group.