

Diversity in TB bacteria hinders rapid diagnosis in West Africa

***Mycobacterium africanum* is responsible for up to 40% of the TB infections in West Africa**

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Dit is de omschrijving

With 1.5 million victims per year, tuberculosis is the world's most deadly infectious disease and it is caused by various mycobacteria. One of these, *Mycobacterium africanum*, is responsible for up to 40% of the TB infections in West Africa. However, most rapid tests to confirm cultures of TB bacteria are optimised for detection of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, which is responsible for most cases worldwide.

Florian Gehre and Boatema Ofori-Anyinam, researchers at the Antwerp Institute of Tropical Medicine (ITM) and the Medical Research Council Unit in Gambia (MRCG), decided to evaluate the commonly used rapid tests. They decided to do so, because they had noticed that these test results differed from the results obtained when sputum from suspected patients is cultured to detect TB bacteria.

Gehre, Ofori-Anyinam and colleagues concluded in the journal *PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases* that more than 20% of TB infections with *Mycobacterium africanum* give a false negative result on the rapid tests. However, the rapid tests will still be used due to the limited costs, the ease of use and the speed with which the results are obtained. The investigators warned that caution is advised and that negative tests are best confirmed by means of an alternative method. In addition to this, the development of new diagnostic tests should take into consideration the different bacterial strains that can cause TB.

The ITM [Unit of Mycobacteriology](#) manages [one of the largest and most varied collections of mycobacterium strains](#) in the world.

Link

- [The study](#)