

West African experts in mycobacteria

We'd like you to meet our institutional partner organisation in Cotonou, Benin, the Laboratoire de Référence de Mycobactéries (LRM)

24-03-15 , 15:52



Dit is de omschrijving

Today, on World Tuberculosis Day, we'd like you to meet our institutional partner organisation in Cotonou, Benin, the Laboratoire de Référence de Mycobactéries (LRM).

Thanks to continuous support and training from ITM, LRM has become a well-functioning lab network for the diagnosis of tuberculosis and Buruli ulcer, both caused by mycobacteria. LRM is even in the running to become the first WHO supranational reference laboratory in West Africa.

Previously, the analyses of tuberculosis and Buruli ulcer strains from Benin largely relied on the laboratory in Antwerp. But, with the support from ITM, LRM progressively expanded the necessary analyses locally, starting from microscopy, going on to implement culture, and finally performing Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR), otherwise known as 'molecular photocopying'. These analyses are crucial to successful diagnosis, to monitor treatment and to reveal how bacteria react to antibiotics. And we believe this should be carried out as close as possible to where most cases of a disease occur. ITM, an international reference laboratory on mycobacteria itself, increasingly focuses on transferring skills by supporting and ensuring the quality of analysis of regional laboratories, such as LRM.

In fact, after years of intense capacity building and collaboration between Antwerp and Cotonou, with support of the Belgian development cooperation, laboratories from Benin and surrounding countries now turn to LRM to diagnose tuberculosis and Buruli ulcer. The two institutes also develop research projects together, and ITM is increasingly encouraging LRM to take the lead in these projects.

