



- [Impact stories](#)
 - [The discovery of and research on the ebola virus](#)
 - [AIDS on the map as an African heterosexual disease](#)
 - [Development of a shorter tuberculosis treatment](#)
 - [World's largest collection of TBC strains](#)
 - [Test for sleeping sickness](#)
 - [Advocate for basic health care](#)
 - [Teacher of health care workers worldwide](#)
 - [Neglected diseases in the spotlight thanks to ITM](#)
 - [The travel clinic: reference point for travellers](#)
 - [BIT-project researches antibiotic resistance](#)
 - [StP - a disruptive look at the South](#)
 - [Multidisciplinary fight against malaria](#)

Administrator of the world's largest collection of tbc strains

In 2013, the World Health Organization gave ITM in Antwerp the responsibility of watching over the largest collection of tuberculosis bacteria in the world.

Resistance of tuberculosis bacteria to antibiotics is a gigantic problem. In 2013, the World Health Organization (WHO) transferred administration of the biggest public research collection of tuberculosis strains on the planet to ITM. This is a major scientific honour for Antwerp. The strains were physically already located at ITM, but with the transfer they officially came to reside in Belgian hands. The bacteria in the freezers of the secure ITM laboratories encompass the worldwide diversity of TBC strains and exhibit various resistance patterns.



Dr Leen Rigouts administers the collection.

Dr Leen Rigouts administers the collection: 'This is a bit of a Noah's Ark when it comes to tuberculosis, and we're proud that the WHO has entrusted it to the city of Antwerp. It enables us to better understand the disease, come up with new medications and develop tests.'

The TBC strains from the WHO's research and training programmes for tropical diseases are part of the collection of mycobacterial strains within the consortium of the Belgian Culture Collection of Microorganisms (BCCM), which in addition to TBC also contains Buruli ulcer strains. The public collection is hence the biggest database in the world for typing tuberculosis bacteria. The BCCM consortium was founded by the federal government in 1983 to coordinate collections of microorganisms at Belgian institutions.