

Singapore issues precautionary screening of tuberculosis

21 January 2021 | News

For those who had prolonged exposure at the Singapore Pools Bedok Betting Centre

The Ministry of Health (MOH) in Singapore has been notified of two genetically separate clusters involving a total of 18 individuals diagnosed with tuberculosis (TB) who had prolonged exposure at the Singapore Pools Bedok Betting Centre. The cases had immediately started treatment following diagnosis and are not a current ongoing public health risk.

The risk of transmission to persons who are not close contacts is very low. However, as a precautionary measure, officers from the Singapore TB Elimination Programme (STEP) will be contacting patrons who have visited Singapore Pools Bedok Betting Centre between 12 February and 25 March 2020 for TB screening.

Screening will be conducted free of charge, at the Tuberculosis Control Unit (TBCU) (142 Moulmein Road). Voluntary screening will also be offered to former patrons who had spent prolonged durations (i.e. cumulatively days) at the Singapore Pools Bedok Betting Centre to watch live horse-racing telecasts between 2018 and 25 March 2020.

In line with MOH's TB prevention strategy, officers from STEP had earlier initiated contact investigations upon notification of each of the cases. Close contacts of all the 18 cases had already been identified and contacted by STEP for screening.

The two clusters were determined by genetic sequencing and epidemiological investigations which concluded in January 2021, as part of retrospective testing of TB cases to determine linkages.

While screening is not compulsory, MOH strongly encourages these individuals to be screened. Those with positive screening results will be offered appropriate advice and follow-up. Those with active TB will be treated immediately while those with latent non-infectious TB will be monitored and treated if necessary.