

Health-economic analysis evaluates TB infection screening strategies among people living with HIV in Thailand

09 February 2026 | News

Analysis modeled one-time TB infection screening in adults living with HIV

A study was recently conducted to support evidence-based decision making in Thailand and to help policymakers in low and middle income countries evaluate screening options for detecting tuberculosis (TB) infection.

The analysis modeled one-time TB infection screening in adults living with HIV and projected lifetime costs and health outcomes based on Thai epidemiological and cost data. According to the published findings, Interferon-gamma releasing assays (IGRAs) such as QuantiFERON-TB Gold Plus (QFT-Plus) by Qiagen, were associated with a lower modeled lifetime risk of progression to active TB, approximately 41% lower than Tuberculin Skin Test (TST), while also demonstrating lower projected lifetime costs per individual screened, despite higher initial test costs.

Lower downstream expenditures for treatment, follow-up, adverse event management, diagnostic confirmation and active TB case management contributed to the overall cost difference. The study further noted that higher false-positive rates associated with TST in BCG-vaccinated populations were a key driver of unnecessary preventive treatment and increased healthcare resource utilisation.

The findings were highlighted at the 10th Asia Pacific Region Conference of the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (APRC 2026) during a symposium session that discusses the topic about optimizing tuberculosis infection testing in high-risk populations.

“The study provides important evidence to inform national screening guideline discussions and resource allocation in high-burden settings,” said Dr Justin Chai, Director of Medical Affairs at QIAGEN. “The results highlight the potential value of more economically efficient screening approaches in supporting TB prevention among people living with HIV. At the same time, operational considerations such as infrastructure, workforce training and logistics remain critical, and further prospective cohort studies will be important to better understand real-world feasibility.”

QuantiFERON-TB Gold Plus is the world's leading Interferon-Gamma Release Assay (IGRA) blood test, with millions of tests

performed annually. It has established itself as a superior alternative to the dated TB skin test (TST), which is less effective in identifying TB infection in people who have received BCG vaccination, which is common for patients from high-TB-burden countries, and in patients who may be unlikely to return for TST interpretation. QuantiFERON-TB Gold Plus has helped patients and providers globally by reducing the number of visits to a single blood draw with a faster turnaround time.