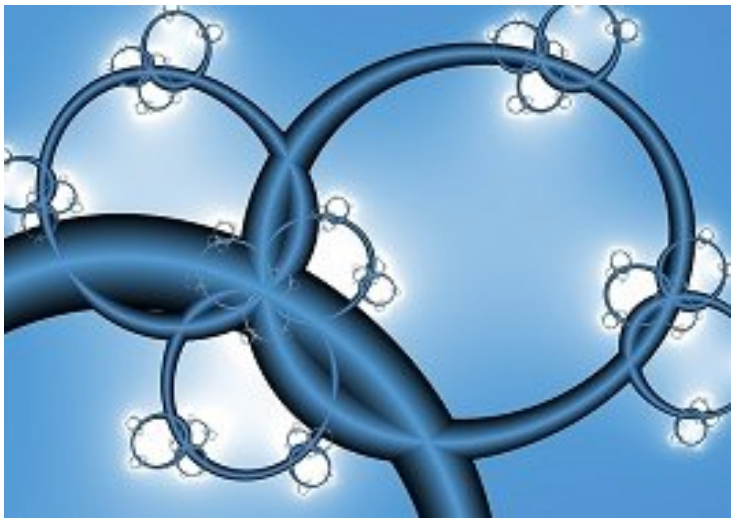
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TB Alliance starts clinical trial of drug resistant TB

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Singapore: TB Alliance has started a clinical trial of a new regimen to treat extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis (XDR-TB). It is the first study to test an all-oral drug regimen, comprised of drugs with minimal pre-existing resistance, that has the potential to shorten, simplify, and improve treatment for XDR-TB.

XDR-TB is a strain of tuberculosis, airborne and infectious, that has resulted from progressive antibiotic resistance and is resistant to four commonly used anti-TB drugs.

"XDR-TB is an absolute devastation to patients, their families, and communities. The study is the first to test a novel and potentially transformative regimen for XDR-TB, which could be a valuable tool as we battle this problem on the front lines in South Africa and around the world," said Dr Francesca Conradie, principal investigator, Nix-TB (New Investigational Drugs for XDR-TB) trial and Clinical Advisor at Sizwe Hospital, in Johannesburg, South Africa. "The strategic emphasis by our National Department of Health on clinical research for drug-resistant TB coupled with a rigorous regulatory framework has enabled this trial to be conducted in South Africa."

XDR-TB has been reported in 100 countries. It is complicated and expensive to treat and results in high rates of death. Today, there are no regulatory-approved XDR-TB treatments.

Currently, healthcare providers treat XDR-TB by individualizing treatment regimens, frequently using antibiotics not normally used for TB as well as toxic medicines not meant for the long treatment duration that TB requires.