

Transcript Details

This is a transcript of an educational program. Details about the program and additional media formats for the program are accessible by visiting: <https://reachmd.com/programs/tackling-tb/tuberculosis-screening-in-at-risk-patients-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/11992/>

ReachMD

www.reachmd.com
info@reachmd.com
(866) 423-7849

Tuberculosis Screening in At-Risk Patients During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Announcer:

Welcome to *Tackling TB* on ReachMD. On this program, Dr. Marie-Claire Rowlinson, who's the assistant laboratory director and CLIA laboratory director at the Florida Department of Health, will discuss how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted tuberculosis screening in at-risk patient populations. Let's hear from Dr. Rowlinson now.

Dr. Rowlinson:

From a laboratory perspective, the COVID-19 pandemic has certainly had an impact. As I'm sure the listeners are very aware, laboratory testing for SARS-CoV-2 has been a major priority of the strategy to fight this pandemic. I'm in the public health laboratory, and we have been very, very busy with testing for COVID-19 since February of this year, and of course, this has had a big impact on our lab. We've been extremely busy, we have had to purchase new instrumentation, we've had to hire new people, and in a way it has impacted the entire laboratory, even TB testing, because we've been either—had stole from that section helping out or we're utilizing instrumentation that they have. However, one of the interesting things has been the drop-off in testing in the other areas of laboratory. So, whilst yes, we have been very busy with COVID testing, our testing for things like TB has actually been down, and I think this is to do in part with the fact that fewer people are accessing health care and getting tested. We actually looked at data in our TB laboratory in volume from this year and compared it to the same time frame last year, and we've seen a significant drop-off in the number of samples that have been provided to us, so that's one of the interesting impacts.

Another thing has been the surprise shortages related to testing. And I think everybody knows that there have been shortages with supplies for COVID-19 testing, but something that's quite interesting that people may not be aware of is that actually supplies for many things in the laboratory have been in short supply. One of these examples is just plastics for testing, like pipette tips, to do some of the testing and automated testing that we do. And so, whilst yes, there's been a supply shortage for COVID, it's actually ended up impacting other areas of the lab.

So those are just some of the things that as laboratorians we've been dealing with but also understanding that we have to maintain the same quality testing for all of the other things that we test for in the public health lab and not just COVID.

Announcer:

That was Dr. Marie-Claire Rowlinson from the Florida Department of Health. To access this and other episodes from this series, visit ReachMD.com/TacklingTB. Thanks for listening.