



Tuberculosis Research Advancement Center
Emory/Georgia

Newsletter



IN THIS ISSUE

PHILCAT ANNUAL CONVENTION

PILOT & ACCELERATOR AWARD RFA UPDATES

WELCOMES

TRACCOLADES

PUBLICATION HIGHLIGHTS

UPCOMING EVENTS

BULLETIN BOARD

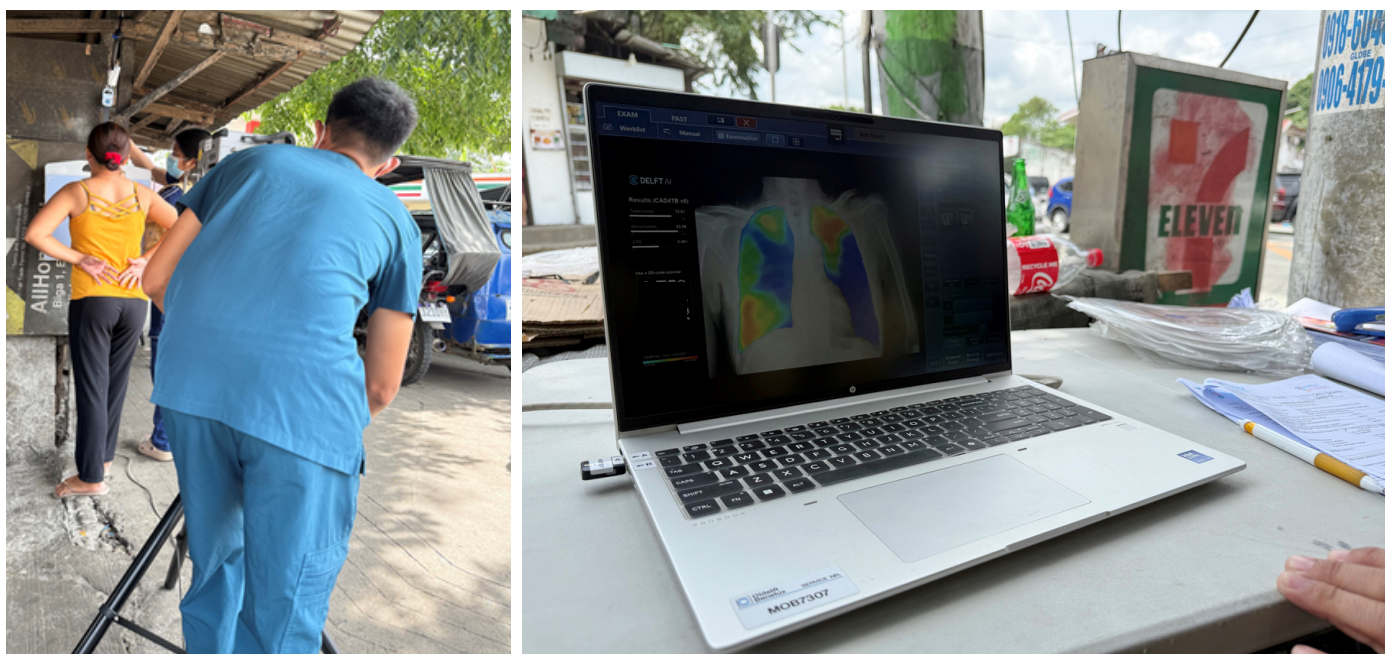
NIH UPDATES

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

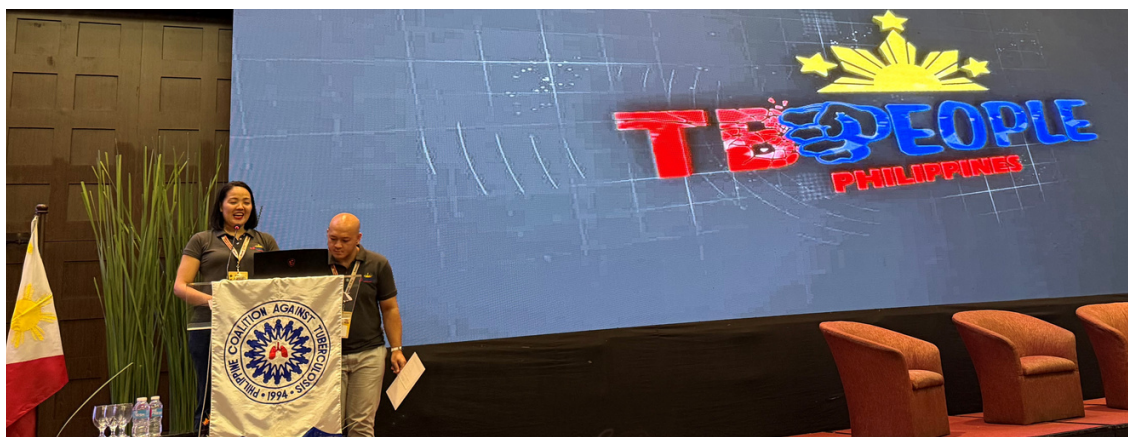
The Philippine Coalition Against Tuberculosis ([PhilCAT](#)) held its 31st Annual Convention with the theme '5 Years to End TB: Today is the Beginning', August 14-15, 2025, in Quezon City, Philippines. TRAC mentee, **Krystle Fetalvero, MD**, with the TB HIV Innovations and Clinical Research Foundation gave an oral presentation in the Innovations in TB Screening: AI and Digital Health plenary session titled '*Reaching the unreachable: Utility of Delft Light Ultra-transportable Xray with CAD4TB Technology and Integrated Lung Health Service Delivery for PUV Drivers in Silang, Cavite*'. The presentation was data from the TB REACH Wave 11 project '*Empowering Community Navigators*'



for Enhanced TB Case Finding and Lung Health Improvement Among Public Health Vehicle Drivers in Silang, Cavite.’ Dr. Fetalvero is Co-Principal investigator of the REACH TB project with **Maricelle Tercela Gler, MD** who also serves as a Board Member for PhiCAT and a Scientific Committee Chair. TRAC Clinical Population Core Co-Director, **Sarita Shah, MD, MPH**, and Emory study staff **Fay Willis, MPH, and Amy Kim, MPH** visited one of the TB REACH study sites and saw the mobile x-ray unit and CAD4TB (Computer-Aided Detection for Tuberculosis) AI software’s use first hand with screening being done at a transport hub.



TRAC Community and Public Health Advisory Board member **Eloisa “Louie” Zepeda-Tang** also presented as President and founder of [TB People Philippines](#) at the PhilCAT convention. Louie is a TB survivor and global health advocate. Read more about how Louie’s commitment to equity, accountability, and lived-experience leadership laid the foundation for a movement that centers the voices of those directly affected by tuberculosis [here](#).



TRAC Funding Opportunity Updates



TRAC Pilot Award Request for Applications



Letter of intent (optional) deadline: September 17, 2025

Proposal submission deadline: October 17, 2025

The TRAC is excited to announce the [Request for Applications](#) for round 4 of the pilot grant initiative to support TB-related research by Early-Stage Investigators (ESIs) and investigators new to TB. Please find more information and resources [here](#). We regret that due to recent changes to NIH policy regarding international subawards that investigators at our international partners are not eligible to apply for this round. For questions regarding the pilot award initiative please contact trac@emory.edu.

TRAC Y4 Accelerator Awards
Tuberculosis Research Acceleration Center
Emory University

MORE INFO HERE
QR CODE

- Fill funding gaps to overcome barriers for critical TB research
- Up to \$4,000
- Application deadline October 17, 2025
(Funds must be expended by February 28, 2026)
- Fast funding decision
- High-performance computing, core services, reagent and supplies costs

EXAMPLE

The Accelerator Award initiative no longer has a rolling deadline. For the current year, for proposals to be completed by February 28, 2026, the application deadline is **October 17, 2025**. Please see the updated [Request for Applications](#) and the TRAC [Find Funding](#) website to review the updated funding

preferences and eligibility criteria. We regret that due to recent changes to NIH policy regarding international subawards that investigators at our international partners are not eligible to apply to this call for applications.

We plan for another call for applications to be released in early 2026 for proposals for projects to be completed in TRAC year 5 which begins March 1, 2026.

For questions regarding the pilot award initiative please contact trac@emory.edu.

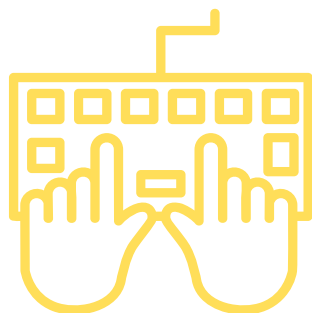
Welcome



Welcome to **Chris Harding, PhD**, who recently joined Dr. Rachel Kinsella's lab in the Emory Vaccine Center as a new postdoctoral fellow. Chris completed his PhD at the University of Louisville on innate immunity to malaria and a post-doc at Seattle Children's Hospital on protein secretion in *M. tuberculosis*. His post-doc project is titled "**Impact of Serum**

Opsonization on Neutrophil Responses and Control of Mycobacterial Infection". His other research interests include bacterial pathogenesis, leukocyte biology, innate immunity to bacterial infections, disease ecology, and vector-borne infectious diseases. In his spare time, Chris enjoys hiking, backpacking, playing music, snowboarding, and spending time with his Australian shepherd, Tula.

We welcome the return of **Amy Kim, MPH**! Amy graduated with an MPH in Epidemiology from Emory in May 2026. During her MPH she worked as a graduate research assistant for 2 years with the Emory-Einstein TB research team. Amy recently transitioned to a Project Coordinator role leading Emory-based coordination for the **TB GEN-CORE** (*Genomic correlates of resistance to Delamanid, Bedaquiline, and other novel TB drugs: implications for diagnostics, therapeutics, and pathogenomics*) study in collaboration with De La Salle Medical and Health Sciences Institute in the Philippines. Amy brings a diverse background and a passion for TB research.



**Have items to include in
a future newsletter?**

Email:

lisa.sharling@emory.edu

TRAColades

A huge congrats to **Gregory Bisson, MD, MSCE** (University of Pennsylvania) and **Sara Auld, MD, MSc** (Emory University) on their NIH R01 award titled “**Excess cardiovascular inflammation in TB: EXFIN-TB**”. Post-TB lung disease is a major contributor to long-term morbidity and mortality however cardiovascular disease



accounts for a greater proportion of post-TB deaths than does pulmonary disease. The overarching hypothesis of the EXFIN-TB study is that TB promotes pulmonary inflammation which drives an increased risk of major cardiovascular events. The study will be conducted in collaboration with Botswana-UPenn partnership. The EXFIN-TB will builds upon Drs. Auld and Bisson’s R01 titled “*Inflammation and Fibrosis in Pulmonary TB: the INFIN-TB Study*” a collaboration with The Aurum Institute, Pretoria, South Africa. Knowledge gained from these studies will directly inform future mechanistic and therapeutic studies with the goal of reducing the burden of post-TB cardiovascular disease for millions of TB survivors.

Congratulations to **Matthew Magee, PhD, MPH** (Emory University), **Moises Huaman, MD, MSc** (University of Cincinnati) and **Yan Sun, PhD, MSc** (Emory University) on their recently awarded NIH R01 titled “**Tuberculosis infection and risk of diabetes mellitus and cardiovascular disease: Epigenetic and cardiometabolic trajectories after TB infection (TACT-TB)**”. Previous theories suggested that diabetes and CVD only predisposed persons to becoming infected with TB; however, recent studies suggest that TB disease increases the risk of both diabetes and CVD. The notion that latent TB infection (LTBI) may increase the risk of cardiometabolic diseases like diabetes and CVD has not been well explored. The TACT-TB study will determine the extent to which LTBI impacts indicators of diabetes and CVD incidence.





Congratulations to **Ayana Paul**, doctoral student in Emory's Graduate Division of Biological and Biomedical Sciences Microbiology and Molecular Genetics Program on being selected as a trainee for the Antimicrobial Resistance and Therapeutic Discovery Training Program (ARTDTP). Ayana will be continuing her dissertation research project titled '**Characterizing the impact of IL-17 and IFN-gamma on macrophage responses after Mycobacterium tuberculosis infection**' in the lab of TRAC Co-Director Jyothi Rengarajan, PhD.

Kudos to **Louis Hopkins**, an ARCS Foundation Herz Global Impact Scholar in the Immunology and Molecular Pathogenesis PhD program at Emory University on being selected as a Infectious Disease Across Scales Training Program trainee for the 2025-26 academic year. Louis will continue his dissertation research assessing the contributions of immune cell crosstalk and inhibitory pathways to tuberculosis disease progression in the lab of TRAC Co-Director Jyothi Rengarajan, PhD.



Congratulations to TRAC Developmental Core Director **Russell Kempker, MD, MSc** on his new NIH K24 award titled '**EnhAncing Research and meNtoring Skills in Tuberculosis (EARN TB)**'. The K24 mechanism is for mid-career investigators and provides protected time to conduct patient-oriented research and mentor junior clinical researchers. Dr Kempker will pursue training in host immunology, bioinformatics, team science, mentorship, and leadership, and carry out TB translational research on the host immune response to Mtb.

Publication Highlights



Congratulations to **Peter Cegielski, MD**, on his International Journal of Epidemiology article titled '**Body mass index and tuberculosis risk: an updated systematic literature review and dose-response meta-analysis**' - a collaboration with researchers at the University of London and London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. The findings of the review and meta analysis refine and extend findings from earlier reviews on the inverse

dose-response relationship between body mass index (BMI) and tuberculosis risk. The review includes cohorts from countries that represent a range in tuberculosis burden to show that in addition to general-population cohorts, the relationship is also seen in people with HIV and people with diabetes. Tuberculosis risk was highest at the lowest BMI values and decreased nonlinearly as BMI increased suggesting that the protective effects of increases in BMI will be most pronounced for the most undernourished. Historical evidence on the impact of improved nutrition on tuberculosis is now complemented by prospective observational, interventional, and modelling evidence. The authors conclude that the global tuberculosis community should ensure that interventions to improve nutrition become an integral component of the global tuberculosis response.

Congrats to Emory University Epidemiology PhD alum **Amy Malik, MPH, PhD, MBBS** and University of Georgia Epidemiology PhD alum **Leo Martinez, PhD** on their editorial in the International Journal of Tuberculosis and Lung Disease titled '**Achieving optimal uptake of TB preventive treatment for rifampin-resistant and/or multidrug-resistant TB**'.

Following a change in WHO's guidance to a 'Strong Recommendation' for a levofloxacin-based preventive treatment regimen for household contacts of rifampicin-resistant/multidrug TB their editorial calls for policy makers and stakeholders to consider the social determinants of health that affect treatment decisions and the integration of patient-centered care, patient enablers, and the provision of psychosocial support and counseling. Regarding efficiently finding contacts of drug-resistant-TB, Drs. Malik and Martinez highlight that most TB programs need to expand drug-resistance



testing and argue for more operational research to determine how best to supplement GeneXpert MTB/RIF an Xpert Ultra testing with contact tracing. The need for monitoring systems for a fluoroquinolone-based regimen is also raised.

Drs. Malik and Martinez are currently Faculty in the Schools of Public Health at Southwestern Medical Center and Boston University respectively.

Upcoming Events

TB WORKS IN PROGRESS SEMINAR: ONGOING STUDIES OF THE HOST RESPONSE TO TB INFECTION AND DISEASE



**Friday October 3rd, 2025, 9 - 10 am
CNR Room 3001 and Zoom [Flyer]**



Zaynab Mousavian, PhD received her PhD in Bioinformatics from the University of Tehran, Iran, after which she worked at the Karolinska Institute, Stockholm, Sweden, and at University of California San Francisco on plasma protein biomarkers for active TB. Dr. Mousavian joined Emory University in early 2025 as a postdoctoral researcher working with Drs. Jeffrey Collins and Matthew Magee on TB biomarker discovery using metabolite data and investigating

connections between TB and non-communicable diseases. Dr. Mousavian has a strong background in computer science, systems biology, and multi-omics analysis, and is passionate about advancing precision medicine in infectious diseases, specifically in TB, through data integration and machine learning.



Happy hour is for students, post-docs, early-career researchers, and senior faculty alike. Come ready to meet colleagues, strengthen professional ties, spark new scientific ideas, and build connections beyond the office.

Place: New Realm Brewery, Atlanta - We'll be on the rooftop, a great spot to enjoy the Beltline, and perfect for fall-ish evenings

Location: 550 Somerset Terrace Northeast, Unit 101

Date: Thursday September 18, 5-7 PM

UNION WEBINAR

ZOONOTIC TUBERCULOSIS: THE STORIES OF TWO SURVIVORS FROM THE AMERICAS

The Union

International Union Against
Tuberculosis and Lung Disease

September 23rd, 11am EST
REGISTER HERE

This webinar will highlight the lived experiences of two survivors of zoonotic tuberculosis (zTB) from the Americas. Too often, discussions about zTB center on epidemiology, surveillance, and control, while the human dimension of the disease remains overlooked. In this session, survivors will share their personal journeys through diagnosis, treatment, and recovery, providing valuable insight into the challenges of living with zTB. Their stories will shed light on the social, cultural, and health system barriers that shape the experience of the disease, while underscoring the importance of integrated One Health approaches to prevention and control.



TRAC Writing Club
ONE HOUR OF WORK. SCIENCE THAT LASTS.

HOW IT WORKS

- Sign into Zoom, say hello to peers and colleagues, and state your goal - **5 minutes**
- Work with focus (no distractions; just time to get it done) - **50 minutes**
- Regroup to share progress - **5 minutes**
- Sessions will be facilitated by Dr. Dawn Comeau (Emory Rollins School of Public Health)

WHAT YOU MIGHT WORK ON

- Outline a literature review
- Draft or revise a manuscript section
- Prepare an email to collaborators or research teams
- Prepare or complete an IRB protocol
- Draft specific aims
- Polish a presentation
- Any task that you have delayed starting...

You'll leave the session with some progress, momentum for your next step, and the chance to connect with peers and colleagues.

WHEN

Thursday, Sep. 11, 12-1pm
Wednesday, Sep. 24, 4-5pm
Friday, Oct. 3, 12-1pm
Wednesday, Oct. 15, 10-11am

Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/95083281661>

ADD TO CALENDAR

Built-in accountability, and a focused hour to move your work forward!

Join one, several or all sessions.

TRAC is hosting a series of one-hour group writing sessions on Zoom. While participants may use this time for writing, it's also a chance to tackle other tasks—like finalizing a presentation or sending that overdue email.

Each session will be facilitated by Dr. Dawn Comeau and will offer an opportunity to network, provide some built-in accountability, and a focused hour to move your work forward.

Sessions have been scheduled on different times of the week and day to hopefully help fit your schedule—you can join one, several, or all of them.

Please see [flyer](#) and download the Outlook invite for the series [here](#).

SYSTEMS BIOLOGY VIRTUAL & IN-PERSON OFFICE HOURS

  **4th Thursday of the month Aug-Oct & Dec 11**
10am - 11am ET, RRR 205 & Zoom



Jeffrey Collins, MD, MS



Xin Hu, PhD



Boris Minasenko, MS



Khader Ghneim, MS



Ashish Sharma, PhD

Drop in to receive one-on-one support from informaticists with 'omics' study design and data analysis for tuberculosis research - including bulk and single cell transcriptomics, metabolomics and lipidomics.

THU
25 **SEPTEMBER**

THU
23 **OCTOBER**

THU
11 **DECEMBER**

For more information please contact: jeffrey.michael.collins@emory.edu

Bulletin Board

Project Coordinator Position - Rollins School of Public Health

A team of TB researchers in the Departments of Global Health and Epidemiology at Rollins School of Public Health is seeking a self-motivated, highly-organized Project Coordinator with experience in research project management and enthusiasm for public health work, who will be responsible for coordinating and monitoring the quality and project progress of a NIH-funded research project being conducted at a domestic research site. This position requires up to 30-35% travel to the domestic site(s) for monitoring project progress on a quarterly basis (1-2 week trips). This position will support the work of Principal Investigators within the team and report directly to the Program Director. For more information regarding key responsibilities and additional job details or apply please see the job posting [here](#).



EMORY

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Recent NIH Notices and Updates



- [Updated NIH Policy on Foreign Subawards](#), NOT-OD-25-104, May 1, 2025
- [New Application Structure for NIH-Funded International Collaborations](#), NOT-OD-25-155, September 12, 2025
 - [FAQs for Foreign Subawards](#) (applications with foreign subawards will be withdrawn for due dates on or after September 25, 2025).
- [Updated NIH Processes for No-Cost Extensions](#), NOT-OD-25-110, May 7, 2025
- [Update: No-Cost Extension Functionality in eRA](#), NOT-OD-25-142, August 7, 2025
- [Early Stage Investigator \(ESI\) Eligibility Extension and Reinstatement](#). NIH has granted automatic extension of ESI eligibility for those impacted by delays in grant application submissions, peer review, or award processing timelines between January 1 – May 1, 2025. See [FAQs](#)
- [Supporting Fairness and Originality in NIH Research Applications](#), NOT-OF-25-132, July 15, 2025
 - NIH will only accept six new, renewal or revision applications from a PD/PI for all council rounds in a calendar year. See updated [FAQs](#).
- [NIH Will Stop Posting Notices of Funding Opportunities in the NIH Guide for Grants and Contracts in FY2026](#), NOT-OD-25-143, August 14, 2015
- [NIH Director Statement: Advancing NIH's Mission Through a Unified Strategy - NIH Priorities](#), August 15, 2025

August Publications

Abdelgawad N, **Wasserman S**, Gausi K, Davis A, Stek C, Wiesner L, **Meintjes G**, Wilkinson RJ, Denti P. [*Population Pharmacokinetics of Rifampicin in Plasma and Cerebrospinal Fluid in Adults With Tuberculosis Meningitis*](#). J Infect Dis. 2025;232(2):e234-e41. DOI: 10.1093/infdis/jiaf178.

Calderin JM, **Wasserman S**, Resendiz-Galvan JE, Abdelgawad N, Davis A, Stek C, Wiesner L, Wilkinson RJ, Denti P. [*Population pharmacokinetics of pyrazinamide and isoniazid in plasma and cerebrospinal fluid from South African adults with tuberculous meningitis*](#). Antimicrob Agents Chemother. 2025;69(8):e0009925. DOI: 10.1128/aac.00099-25.

Carpi G, Seifert M, De la Rossa A, Uplekar S, Rodrigues C, **Tukvadze N**, **Omar SV**, Suresh A, Rodwell TC, Colman RE. [*Comparative assessment of line probe assays and targeted next-generation sequencing in drug-resistant tuberculosis diagnosis*](#). EBioMedicine. 2025;119:105875. DOI: 10.1016/j.ebiom.2025.105875.

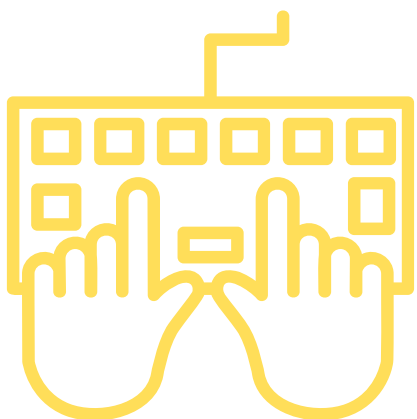
Churchyard GJ, Swindells S, Gupta A, **Shah NS**, Hughes M, Kim S, Fox GJ, Harrington M, Chaisson RE, Hesselning AC. Preventing multidrug resistant tuberculosis: the dawn of a new era. Clin Infect Dis. 2025. DOI: 10.1093/cid/ciaf426.

Dagnew AF, Han LL, **Naidoo K**, Fairlie L, Innes JC, Middelkoop K, Tameris M, Wilkinson RJ, Ananworanich J, Bower D, Schlehuber L, Frahm N, Cinar A, Dunne M, Schmidt AC. Safety and immunogenicity of investigational tuberculosis vaccine M72/AS01(E-4) in people living with HIV in South Africa: an observer-blinded, randomised, controlled, phase 2 trial. Lancet HIV. 2025;12(8):e546-e55. DOI: 10.1016/s2352-3018(25)00124-9.

Harrison LJ, Velásquez GE, **Kempker RR**, Imperial MZ, Nuernberger E, Dorman SE, Ignatius E, Granche J, Phillips PPJ, Furin J, Yang E, Foley C, Chiambah S, Rogers R, Van Grack A, Roa J, Shenje J, Nerette S, Kanyama C, Kyeyune RB, Mendoza-Ticona A, Murtaugh W, Foraida S, Goth M, Vernon A, Dooley KE, Savic RM. ACTG A5409 (RAD-TB): Study protocol for a phase 2 randomized, adaptive, dose-ranging, open-label trial of novel regimens for the treatment of pulmonary tuberculosis. Trials. 2025;26(1):291. DOI: 10.1186/s13063-025-08973-w.

Jansen van Vuuren CJ, van der Molen J, Sookrajh Y, Ngwenya T, Khubone T, Mkhize S, Asare K, **Naidoo K**, Lessells R, Lewis L, Garrett N, Dorward J. Retrospective cohort analysis of antiretroviral therapy initiation timelines and clinical outcomes in adults with HIV and TB disease in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Int J STD AIDS. 2025;9564624251369565. DOI: 10.1177/09564624251369565.

Saunders MJ, **Cegielski JP**, Clark RA, Houben R, McQuaid CF. Body mass index and tuberculosis risk: an updated systematic literature review and dose-response meta-analysis. Int J Epidemiol. 2025;54(5). DOI: 10.1093/ije/dyaf154.



Have items to include in
a future newsletter?

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