

Tuberculosis in Brazil: A historical view from the local BCG vaccine manufacturer

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The Brazilian League Against Tuberculosis, known as the Ataulpho de Paiva Foundation (FAP), was founded in 1900. The organization's goals included combating the disease through prevention, diagnosis, home care, and public awareness. Several historical milestones have been achieved, including advances in TB control and use of new vaccines. In 1930, we began producing the oral BCG vaccine that was replaced by the intradermal in the 1970s. In the beginning of this century, our BCG strain was extensively studied. Genomics, proteomics, immunological studies, and the largest clinical study among all BCG vaccines were conducted and showed that our BCG has low virulence and high immunogenicity compared to other BCG vaccines. Currently, FAP continues to play a role in controlling TB through its assistance activities in Duque de Caxias – RJ, a municipality with a high rate of TB incidence, abandonment, and mortality from the disease. Over the years, we have overcome various challenges through policies and practices aimed at mitigating the impact of TB on our population, such as active search strategies focusing on patients with a history of TB. Retreatment is a risk factor for unfavorable treatment outcomes and, primarily, for the spread of the disease within families, which generally share the same living conditions. Despite the high success rate in completing treatment among patients monitored by FAP community agents, we continue to observe, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, a decrease in vaccination rates, an increase in TB cases, a low proportion of contact investigations, and difficulty in treatment adherence. New vaccines against TB are likely to enter the market in the coming years and may or may not replace BCG for neonatal use. We are actively monitoring these developments, and a partnership with a company that has a potential vaccine candidate has already been established.

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Conflicts of Interest

None

