

Perceptions of the incarcerated population regarding tuberculosis research and vaccines

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Introduction: Tuberculosis (TB) remains a leading cause of mortality from infectious disease worldwide. Among persons deprived of liberty (PDL) in the Americas, TB incidence rates are >25 times higher than in the general population. Several TB vaccine candidates are in Phase 2 and 3 clinical trials; if successful, this could represent a transformational tool for accelerating progress in TB control. Due to historical instances of exploitation and mistreatment of PDL in medical research, there are valid concerns about their inclusion in vaccine trials. To date, however, their views on participation in vaccine research have not been considered. We aimed to understand Brazilian PDL's perceptions and attitudes regarding TB, TB vaccines, and participation in TB vaccine trials.

Methods: We are conducting a qualitative study based on focus groups, to be carried out in nine closed prison units (six male, three female) in six capitals in Brazil. In the discussions, we elicited PDL's perceptions regarding research on TB and vaccines and explored attitudes and concerns surrounding inclusion of PDL in trials of new TB vaccine candidates.

Results and Discussion: The preliminary results concern incarcerated individuals about the risk of contracting TB in prisons. Opinions on vaccine acceptance are diverse, with some expressing distrust and others recognizing their importance. Most would participate in a TB vaccine study if provided with clear information on efficacy and safety. They demand transparency and respect for their rights when deciding to participate. It is essential to ensure that incarcerated individuals are treated with dignity and that their health decisions are respected, avoiding any form of coercion. Informed consent must be a central pillar in any study or medical intervention within prisons. Ensuring that the voices of incarcerated individuals are heard and considered in decisions affecting their health is an ethical aspect that must be taken into account.

Funding Sources

This work is funded by Silicon Valley Community Foundation e a Open Philanthropy Project LLC ("Open Phil LLC").

Conflicts of Interest

None.

