

# Perceptions of the Incarcerated Population Regarding Tuberculosis Research and Vaccines

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## Background

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 conducted a qualitative focus group study in seven closed prisons (five male, two female) in **five cities across Brazil**.

In the discussions, we elicited PDL perceptions regarding TB and vaccine research and explored attitudes and concerns surrounding PDL inclusion in trials of new TB vaccine candidates.

### Focus Groups (FG) in prison units in participating centers

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>03/22/2024</li> <li>13 participants</li> </ul> <p>FG IPCG Campo Grande - MS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>04/15/2024</li> <li>15 participants</li> </ul> <p>FG CEPEM Porto velho - RO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>05/17/2024</li> <li>12 participants</li> </ul> <p>FG Prison "José Maria Alkimir" Ribeirão das Neves - MG</p>
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**Male Prison's**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>07/25/2024</li> <li>12 participants</li> </ul> <p>FG COMPAJ Manaus - AM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>08/06/2024</li> <li>12 participants</li> </ul> <p>FG Prison "Modulada Estadual" Montenegro - RS</p>
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**Female Prison's**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>02/15/2024</li> <li>14 participants</li> </ul> <p>FG Female prison "Irmã Zorzi" Campo Grande - MS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>07/26/2024</li> <li>13 participants</li> </ul> <p>FG Female prison - Manaus - AM</p>
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## Acknowledgements

People deprived of liberty who agreed to participate in the study, to the research centers and the funding agency.

## Results

- ✓ Incarcerated individuals express concern about the risk of contracting TB in prisons and negative experiences with prison staff.
- ✓ Opinions on vaccines 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.

### Dimensions and categories of analysis for the perception of the population deprived of liberty

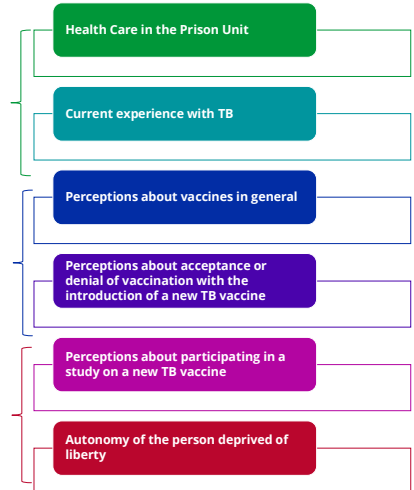
#### Dimensions

Perceptions about health in prison units

Perceptions about vaccines in general

Perceptions about participation in research on new vaccines

#### Categories of analysis



*"To be honest, there's a lot of negligence on the part of some staff. Some try to help us, but others, they don't care"*

*"Even when we need to leave to go to the hospital, it's under guard. I think that there needs to be more attention to our health situation in here."*

*"I think that people die even while being treated, because the disease requires attention, because it is a serious disease"*

*"Because you are living together in a closed environment, with little ventilation, there is nowhere to run. So everyone is susceptible to catching (this disease)"*

*"If there is a vaccine, with clear information and everything in order, everyone will embrace the cause."*

*"It would be great if a vaccine to combat tuberculosis were developed, it would help a lot of people."*

*"I would be proud to know that the government is going to do this, they are betting on it, that the doctors and researchers have invested in this, to know that it is worth it to put someone in charge who is (committed to) health."*

*"But, if you provide the explanation, on paper, which we would be signing and reading, and it said there that you would be responsible for any eventual severity or error that would happen to us, then yes, I would participate."*

*"I wanted to say that the right to be heard is very good for us. When we enter this system, we lose many rights. This right to be heard is very good for us. So, as long as there is respect from both sides, it becomes easier for us to accept the treatment itself."*

## Discussion/Conclusion

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.

