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World's 29% TB cases reported from India

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Indore: Bridging the infrastructure gap to connect rural and remote locations by pumping in more funds and early diagnosis are the key to cure tuberculosis (TB), said experts.

TB is the second highest cause of deaths in the world with India having the highest disease burden, where about 29 per cent of world's cases are reported despite the fact that around 90 per cent cases can be treated by medicines, said experts. Seyed E Hasnain, vice chancellor at Jamia Hamdard University, Delhi and professor of biological sciences said, "TB is a serious problem and it is completely curable but yet people die due to lack of early diagnosis and lack of infrastructure highly missing in rural areas. Devices currently

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used are expensive and cannot be used in rural areas due to lack of electricity."

Scientists and academicians from across the world discussed disruptions in technology, innovations and drugs to help mankind cure some prevalent diseases at an international conference on 'Emerging Areas of Biosciences and Biomedical Technologies' organised by Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Indore on Friday.

Experts said primary health centres lack equipment to diagnose TB besides fear of social boycott attached with the disease makes treatment further out of reach of patients. Experts also stressed on the need of funds for better results in treating TB.

Professor Steffen Stenger, University of Ulm, Germany said, "TB treatment is highly underfunded. HIV has far better results because a lot of work is being done at different platforms as fund is huge unlike TB. In India the issues are absence of well-structured and organised health centres."

Experts doubted Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ambitious target to end TB by 2025. World Health Organisation plans to eradicate TB in 33 countries including India by 2035. Hasnain said, "I have my doubts to be able to eradicate TB by 2025 but there is nothing wrong in giving it a try. We have come up with a new diagnostic battery-operated tool for detecting TB, which is rapid and far more economical and can be easily used at any rural health centre."