

Treatment Shortening of Tuberculosis: Where Do We Stand?



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Tuberculosis (TB) treatment involves prolonged use of multiple drugs that are often associated with significant side effects. As a result, treatment outcomes are frequently suboptimal, with many patients experiencing loss to follow-up or even death during therapy. These challenges are observed not only in patients with multidrug-resistant or rifampicin-resistant TB (MDR/RR-TB), but also in those with drug-susceptible TB.

Over the past decade, numerous efforts have been made to shorten the duration of TB treatment. These efforts have primarily focused on three key strategies:

1. Modifying the dosage of existing anti-TB drugs,
2. Developing novel treatment regimens by combining new and repurposed anti-TB drugs, and
3. Applying clinical and immunological biomarkers to predict treatment responses and tailor therapy duration for individual patients through a stratified or precision medicine approach.

This presentation will provide an overview of the theoretical basis for treatment shortening in TB, summarize major research achievements to date, and discuss remaining challenges and future directions in this field.