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Title: Territorial distribution of multi-drug-resistant tuberculosis in Paraiba, Brazil

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Body: Background: Multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) is a worldwide concern but its magnitude in the state of Paraiba -Brazil has not been reported. Objective: To enroll all cases of MDR-TB in State of Paraiba and check territorial distribution. Methods: Using tabulated data collected by the MDR-TB Epidemiologic Vigilance System, in the period January 2002 to December 2010, we enrolled cities of residence of each case and provided an territorial picture o MDR-TB, regarding space distribution and city population. Population data were collected from Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics - IBGE, June 2008. Results: Paraiba is the 13th Brazilian State in order of population (3,769,977 inhabitants, 1.9% of Brazilian population). Total tuberculosis cases in Paraiba were 7332 (1.4% Brazilian cases). Absolute number of MDR-TB was 39 (1,3% of total Brazilian cases). The proportion of MDR-TB and total tuberculosis cases in Paraiba was 0,53%. In concerning to territory distribution, MDR-TB cases scattered over 19 of 223 cities of Paraiba. Although most inhabited cities presented more cases, it did not happen in a proportional fashion. Some important cities (50 to 100 thousand inhabitants) presented no case. More interesting, MRD-TB occurred also in small cities, with less than 3.000 inhabitants. More than one third of cases occurred in cities with less than 50,000 inhabitants. Most cases occurred less than 200Km from capital (Joao Pessoa). Conclusion: MDR-TB cases are scattered over 19 cities in Paraiba, including less inhabited cities. Preventive approaches, early diagnosis and the development of effective and relatively inexpensive methods of case search should be emphasized.