

Tuberculosis among Toronto's Homeless and Underhoused Community in 2006

A total of 7* cases of tuberculosis (TB) among Toronto's homeless/underhoused community were found in 2006. Of the 7 cases, all were male, all had pulmonary tuberculosis, and 71 % were Canadian-born (see table 1 below). Among the 5 Canadian-born cases, 3 were aboriginal (43% of the total cases).

Cases were included in this summary if they were reported or diagnosed in 2006; and the risk setting was "shelter" or the risk factor was "homeless" or "underhoused". Of the six different strains identified in the 2006 cases, two cases were found to have the strain of tuberculosis implicated in the 2000-2002 shelter outbreak. Many of the cases had concurrent conditions such as substance use and mental health issues. Two individuals were known to be co-infected with HIV/AIDS, and 3 with either Hepatitis B or C.

Method of Detection: Two cases were found due to routine contact follow-up, and another 2 self-presented due to symptoms. The other 3 cases presented at hospital for other conditions, and were tested for tuberculosis because they were known to be homeless.

Outcomes: Five of the cases successfully completed treatment. One case died before diagnosis from another, unrelated cause, and the final case transferred to another jurisdiction.

Table 1. Tuberculosis Cases in Toronto's Homeless and Underhoused Community, 2006. (n=7)	
Variable	N (%)
Gender	
Male	7 (100)
Female	0
Average age at onset (range)	40 (23-48)
Site of infection	
Pulmonary only	4 (57)
Pulmonary + extrapulmonary	3 (43)
Shelter Role*	
Client	7 (100)
Staff	0
Origin	
Canadian-born	5 (71)
Foreign-born	2 (29)

*Note that there are only 6 cases reported with shelter as a risk factor in the 2006 CD Summary Report published by Toronto Public Health. This report also includes underhoused cases.

November 29, 2007