TUBERLOSIS (TB) IN AIDS

The global war on AIDS could be lost if the world ignores tuberculosis, often a death sentence for people infected with HIV, former South African President Nelson Mandela warned at a global AIDS conference recently held in Bangkok. “The world has made defeating AIDS its priority. This is a blessing, but TB remains ignored”, said Mandela. He steered clear the controversy to focus on the plight of millions suffering from HIV and TB.

About 14 million people are infected with HIV and T.B,

70% living in Sub-Saharan Africa, the region hardest hit by HIV/AIDS, which has killed 20 million worldwide. HIV, the virus which causes AIDS, destroys the immune system and makes patients vulnerable to diseases such as TB, an infectious illness that accounts for up to one-third of all HIV/AIDS deaths.

“We cannot win the battle against AIDS if we do not fight TB. TB is too often a death sentence for people with AIDS. It does not have to be this way” Mandela said. He said resources for detecting and treating TB were woefully short despite the world having had a cure for it more than 50 years ago.

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