Tuberculosis: Bacteria That Cause It, Symptoms

We are surrounded by a lot of bacteria in the world that could potentially enter our bodies and create harm or good for the immune system. Although our bodies are balanced with good and bad bacteria, Tuberculosis is not a bacteria that you would want in your body. A person who has Tuberculosis can be a potential harm to those around them, whether they are friends or family. This disease is divided into active and non-active which indicate if the person is a risk factor that can spread the disease. Tuberculosis is a disease that is able to spread fast or not spread at all.

Tuberculosis is also referred to as TB abbreviated. It is a harmful disease in the lungs that can lead to death if left untreated. The bacteria that causes the disease is called Mycobacterium Tuberculosis. According to an article that explains about the disease, “M. tuberculosis has unusually waxy walls, is slow-growing and among the most recalcitrant bacteria to treatment” (Jr.). It all depends on how much harm the bacteria can do to your lungs or other body parts whether or not you take treatment. Even though the bacteria is stubborn with the treatment, the best solution would be to complete the treatment necessary.

The disease is separated into two categories of active and inactive. Inactive Tuberculosis is referred to Latent TB and active is just Active Tuberculosis. Latent TB is not harmful, contagious, or dangerous exposure to the people surrounding the person with the disease. Stated in an article about inactive TB on a website named Mayo Clinic saying, “In this condition, you have a TB infection, but the bacteria remain in your body in an inactive state and cause no symptoms” (“Tuberculosis”). Therefore, if no symptoms are present, the best decision that could be made is to get tested for the disease with a doctor just to be on the safe side. If Latent TB is present, treatment should be taken and completed so that there is no chance of getting active TB. In other cases, the most harmful category of TB is when it is ruled as active. Active TB will prevent you from living life normally because it could make you become isolated for the time being on the treatment so that there is no exposure or risk to the people close to them. According to an article on a website named Medline Plus, “You are more likely to get TB if you have a weak immune system” (“Tuberculosis | TB | TB Test”). Since TB is attracted to a weak immune system, it can be caused by smoking, consuming alcohol, or having a poor nutrition in general.

Active Tuberculosis has many symptoms that can allow for you to make a visit to the doctor or the ER of a hospital to get checked out immediately. By having active TB, the person can transmit the bacteria through the air. According to an informational website named Mayo Clinic, “This can happen when someone with the untreated, active form of tuberculosis coughs, speaks, sneezes, spits, laughs or sings” (“Tuberculosis”). The transmission of the bacteria can give symptoms that include having a cough for about 3 weeks that won’t go away, unexpected weight loss, having no appetite, coughing up blood or mucus, feeling weak or fatigued, with a fever, or having abnormal night sweats. In an article from a website named American Lung Association it informs that, “When a person gets active TB disease, it means TB bacteria are multiplying and attacking the lung(s) or other parts of the body, such as the lymph nodes, bones, kidney, brain, spine, and even the skin” (“Learn About Tuberculosis”). For this reason, it is important that the infected person begins the treatment prescribed by their doctor so that they can become healthy and non-contagious.

The discovery of Mycobacterium Tuberculosis was in March 24, 1882 by a doctor named Robert Koch. In an informational website named Centers for Disease Control and Prevention statistically states that, “During [the 1800’s], TB killed one out of every seven people living in the United States and Europe” (“History of World TB Day”). The ratio to this day is not the same as back in the 1800’s since treatments of antibiotics have been introduced. Although Dr. Robert Koch discovered Mycobacterium Tuberculosis, a person named Johann Schonlein invented the word Tuberculosis. In the 1700’s, the disease was also known as “the white plague”. In the 1800’s, the disease was known as “consumption” and “Captain of all these men of death” because it damaged one’s lungs and caused the person to die. Tuberculosis is not just found in humans but also in animals. It has been found by archeologists that ancient bison from Wyoming have had the disease in their bones around and since 17,000 years ago. The earliest mentions written of Tuberculosis take place in India and China, but the origin is in Africa about 70,000 years ago.

Although Tuberculosis has no cure, it does have treatments so that the person indicated can be in a healthy state. For the person to be ruled to have the bacteria, skin tests, blood tests, chest x-rays or sputum tests are conducted. According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on the skin test performed, “The test is performed by injecting a small amount of fluid (called tuberculin) into the skin on the lower part of the arm. A health care worker “reads” the test 48-72 hours later” (“History of World TB Day”). This is performed to test for the disease, but it does not give accurate results as a blood test and chest x-rays would. Blood tests indicate if tuberculosis is present while the chest x-rays rule out active or latent TB. Antibiotics used for the treatment of Tuberculosis are Isoniazid, Rifampin (Rifadin, Rimactane), Ethambutol (Myambutol), or Pyrazinamide.

Mycobacterium Tuberculosis is a bad bacteria that transmits to people with a weak immune system. It is an airborne disease that can be exposed to others by simply singing, speaking, and laughing. A person with Tuberculosis should begin and complete treatment to get better and not be in any danger. Once someone is diagnosed with Tuberculosis, the bacteria is in the body for the rest of their life, but once they complete treatment their life should be able to go to normal without restrictions.