

# Just a phone call away: consultation calls to California Department of Public Health tuberculosis clinicians, 2016-2017

Jenna Feraud, Shereen Katrak, Pennan M. Barry, Jennifer Flood  
Tuberculosis Control Branch, California Department of Public Health

## Background

- California Department of Public Health tuberculosis (TB) clinicians provide expert medical consultation to healthcare providers from health departments, community clinical settings, and other facilities
- Real-time assistance is made available through phone and e-mail consultation

## Objectives

- Describe the consultation service call frequency, call topics, and caller affiliation
- Assess knowledge gaps to inform future training

## Methods

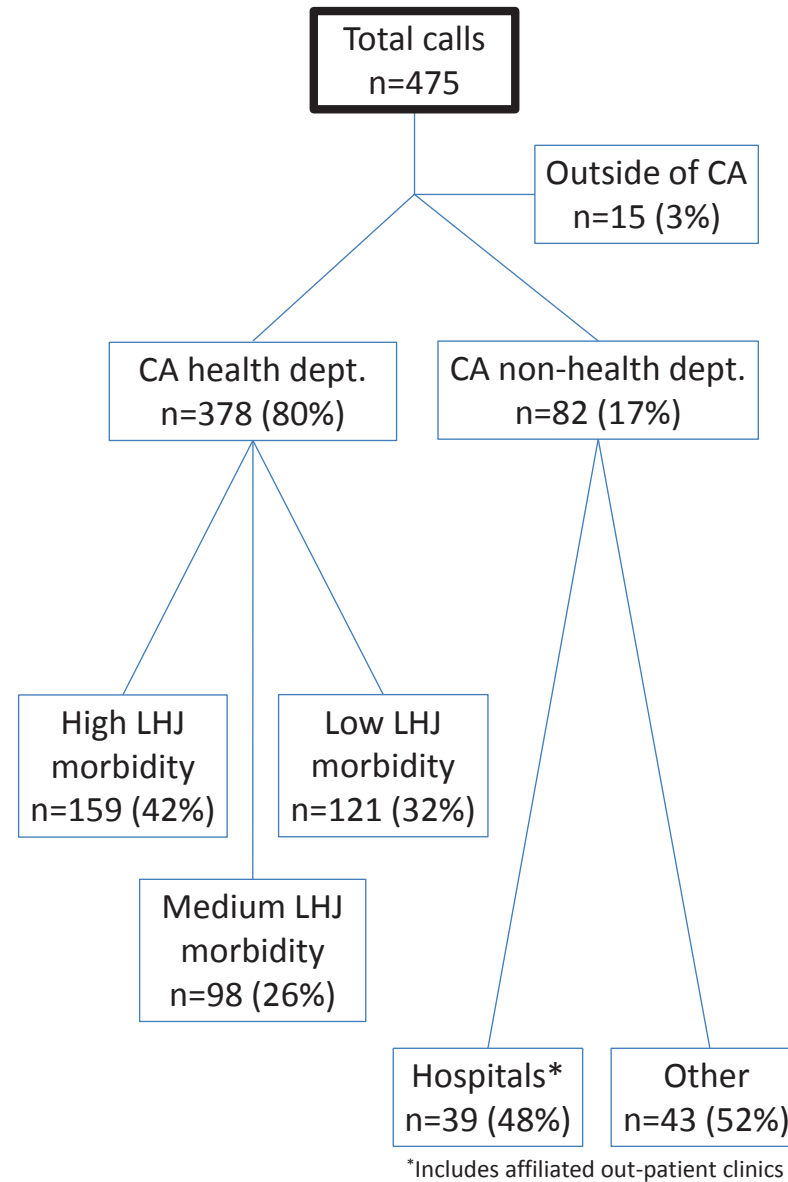
Analyzed 2016 and 2017 consultations to determine:

- Caller affiliation:** CA health department; CA non-health department; outside of CA
- Primary topic:** active TB disease, latent TB infection (LTBI), infection control (IC), contact investigation (CI), other
- Secondary topic:** treatment, diagnosis, screening, policy/legal, other
- Patient characteristics and coexisting clinical conditions**
- Local health jurisdiction (LHJ) morbidity level**

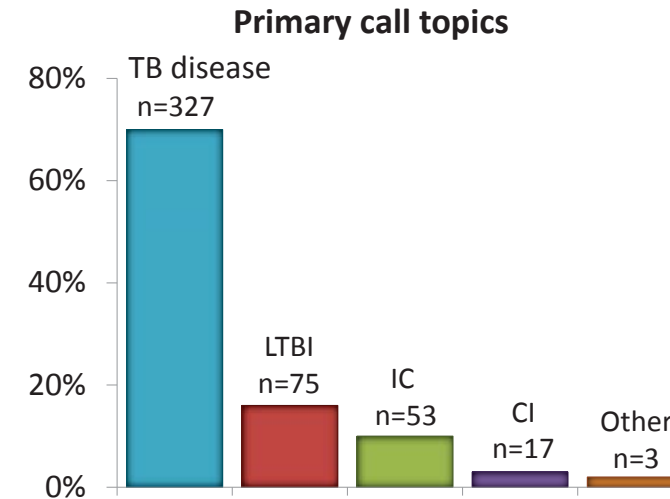
Definitions:

- LHJ morbidity level:** high (>50 TB cases/year), medium (11-50 TB cases/year), low (0-10 TB cases/year)
- Age:** pediatric (<18 years), elderly (≥65 years)

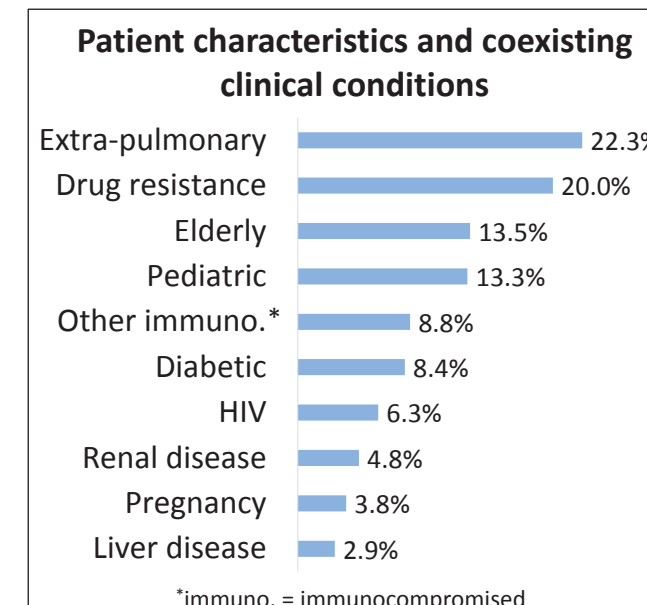
## Results



	LHJ morbidity level and number of patient characteristics/coexisting clinical conditions	
	0-1	2+
High	118 (43.5%)	41 (38.3%)
Medium	73 (27%)	25 (23.4%)
Low	80 (29.5%)	41 (38.3%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>271 (100%)</b>	<b>107 (100%)</b>



	Secondary call topics	
	TB	LTBI
Treatment	217 (66%)	47 (63%)
Diagnosis	90 (28%)	14 (19%)
Screening	12 (4%)	13 (17%)
Policy/legal	4 (1%)	1 (1%)
Other	4 (1%)	0 (0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>327 (100%)</b>	<b>75 (100%)</b>



## Summary

- The majority of calls were from California health departments, with all TB morbidity levels represented
- Questions on treatment were more frequent than diagnosis, and coexisting clinical conditions were common
- A diverse spectrum of non-health department entities utilized the State clinician consultation service, including out-of-state callers

## Limitations

- Call total represents minimal estimate
- Variable reporting of clinical details
- Lack of standardized call data collection tool

## Conclusions

- While questions pertaining to TB disease were most common, calls spanned multiple TB topics
- As TB disease declines, TB experience is also expected to decline, increasing the need for expert consultation
- Enhancing clinicians' capacity to prevent and recognize TB and provide effective treatment may help prevent disease spread
- Development of a structured data collection instrument for calls is planned

For more information, please contact  
jenna.feraud@cdph.ca.gov

**Acknowledgments:** State TB physicians, TB program liaisons, and California TB control programs