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A global strategy for tuberculosis research and innovation

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Member States have adopted the global strategy for TB research and innovation through a written silence procedure of the 73rd World Health Assembly to accelerate TB research and innovation, and to improve equitable access to the benefits of research <https://bit.ly/36dyVmB>

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To the Editor:

We read with interest the editorial by SAUNDERS and EVANS [1] summarising the high risk the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic poses with regard to reversing the gains made to date on ending tuberculosis (TB), and the urgent need for innovative solutions to address the clinical, social and economic determinants of the disease. TB is the leading cause of death from a single infectious agent globally, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic risks making TB even more catastrophic. Effective diagnosis and treatment have saved an estimated 58 million lives between 2000 and 2018 [2], but despite best efforts, 10 million people fell ill from TB and 1.5 million died from the disease in 2018 alone. The End TB Strategy articulates that safer and more effective vaccines, diagnostics and medicines, together with appropriate programmatic innovations are imperative to significantly reduce disease incidence and mortality [3]. Thanks to efforts in the past decade, several drugs, vaccines and diagnostics are under clinical development. As an example, in 2018, the M72/AS01_E vaccine candidate was found to be protective against TB disease in a phase IIb trial among individuals with TB infection [4]. If the findings are confirmed, the vaccine has the potential to transform global TB prevention efforts.