

## TB mortality rate remains high: Expert

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*Image: REUTERS A tuberculosis patient holds their medicines received from the government's tuberculosis center in Rawalpindi, Pakistan July 11, 2016. Picture taken July 11, 2016. REUTERS/Faisal Mahmood*

The global Tuberculosis (TB) mortality rate remains alarmingly high despite the disease being curable.

That's the view of the Head of TB and HIV Treatment Research at the Centre for the Aids Programme of Research in Durban, CAPRISA. Kogie Naidoo was addressing the SA TB Conference in Durban, looking at tuberculosis drug developments in the pipeline.

Naidoo says while there are ongoing advances in new TB regimens, the rates of toxicity for TB drugs remains concerning. "We know that in SA in 2021, there were approximately 61 000 TB deaths. What that equates to is two deaths every nine minutes from TB in SA. We can see in our day-to-day practice that mortality from TB is unacceptably high. There are multiple drugs and regimens undergoing investigation and research so there have been huge advances to help us move forward."

Meanwhile, Dr. Muhammad Osman from the Desmond Tutu TB Centre has emphasised the need for community-based advocacy, saying that a purely digital approach to bridging the gap between those who are tested for TB and those who are not, will not work.

"The fact that we know there is a large proportion, up to 25% lost between diagnosis and treatment that we don't report on needs to change, we do need to include the broader community. The opportunity for advocates for TB comes from our communities and there needs to be a space for them. Linkage to care is more than just a digital solution."