

between the emphasis placed on chest X-ray activities and the decline in the tuberculosis mortality rate.

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Reports thus far received for 1951 show a considerable decline in the number of chest X-ray examinations. Probably only about 13 million were made—a decrease of 2 million as compared with 1950. This decrease was greatly accelerated during the last 6 months of 1951, with the total number of examinations for that period nearly 1.5 million below the total for the corresponding 6-month period in 1950.

#### REFERENCES

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## Prevalence of Tuberculosis in the United States

Current estimates place the number of active tuberculosis cases in the United States at 400,000. Of this number 150,000 are undiscovered.

These figures replace the half-million estimate, widely used during the past decade, which was based on tuberculosis mortality data. The new estimate is based upon the findings of chest X-ray programs throughout the country, plus an inventory of tuberculosis cases registered with local health departments. A joint committee of the National Tuberculosis Association and the Division of Chronic Disease and Tuberculosis of the Public Health Service prepared the new estimate.

Recent chest X-ray surveys of adult populations (15 years of age and over) have revealed approximately one active case for every 1,000 examinations. Since there are approximately 110 million adults in the United States, the committee believed that there were probably at least 110,000 undiscovered active cases of tuberculosis. The upward adjustment of this 110,000 estimate to 150,000 was based upon the belief that estimates from surveys tend to understate

the true prevalence of undiscovered tuberculosis and to compensate for the omission of the active cases in the population under 15 years of age.

Information available from health department case registers in all parts of the country—operated under widely varying conditions and representing about one-fourth of the population of the United States—indicates that for the country as a whole there are records for about 250,000 active tuberculosis cases. This figure, when added to the estimated 150,000 undiscovered active cases, yields the 400,000 figure.

In addition, the committee estimated that there are 800,000 important inactive cases of tuberculosis in the country, 550,000 of them currently undiscovered. This estimate was also based upon the findings of chest X-ray programs and an inventory of tuberculosis cases registered in the United States.

The current estimates released by the committee are summarized as follows:

	Total	Known	Undiscovered
Total -----	1,200,000	500,000	700,000
Active -----	400,000	250,000	150,000
Inactive -----	800,000	250,000	550,000