

## Cases on Current Tuberculosis Registers

The annual number of new cases of tuberculosis reported is a useful indicator of trends and the adequacy of control activities, but it is not a measure of the tuberculosis caseloads of health departments. Under the most favorable circumstances, tuberculosis patients need to be under treatment and public health supervision for at least 2 years after diagnosis of active disease. Many patients are carried on health department rolls for a considerable length of time before disease activity is determined, and some, either because of inadequate or interrupted treatment or because of failure to respond to treatment, remain on the registers for many years.

All these cases require service from health departments. The newly reported cases are therefore only a fraction of the tuberculosis caseload. According to the estimate presented below, the number of cases on current tuberculosis registers of health departments on December 31, 1960, was 6 times the 55,000 newly reported active cases for calendar year 1960.

<i>Cases</i> <sup>1</sup>	<i>Number</i>
Active -----	120,000
Hospitalized -----	58,000
Unhospitalized -----	62,000
Other -----	210,000
 Total -----	 330,000

<sup>1</sup> Includes Alaska and Hawaii, excludes Puerto Rico.

The estimate of active cases in and outside hospitals was based on information received

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*Prepared by the staff of the Tuberculosis Branch, Communicable Disease Center, Public Health Service. The estimates for 1960 were prepared by Lawrence W. Shaw, now with Cooperative Studies, Department of Medicine and Surgery, Veterans Administration, and Arthur H. Wyman, now with the Grants Management Branch, Division of Community Health Practices, Public Health Service.*

from States on the form "Annual Tuberculosis Reports" (PHS 1393). Estimates of "other" cases on current registers were constructed from case register summaries received from 46 State and local health departments which reported 43 percent of the new cases in 1960. The "other" cases include those with activity undetermined, as well as inactive cases under current supervision. About 50,000 of the 210,000 "other" cases are under drug therapy. Those 50,000, together with the 62,000 unhospitalized active cases, are receiving the most service from health departments.

No attempt has been made to estimate either unknown cases or the known inactive cases no longer carried on current registers.

The estimates were assembled from data provided by health departments which have various policies and recordkeeping practices, and the totals are therefore not necessarily homogeneous. Practices have also varied over periods of time, so that these figures are not completely comparable with similar estimates made in earlier years. However, comparison with 1952 and 1956 estimates, as shown below, gives a rough picture of general trends.

<i>Cases</i>	<i>1952</i>	<i>1956</i>	<i>1960</i>
Active -----	200,000	<sup>1</sup> 160,000	120,000
Other -----	250,000	<sup>1</sup> 240,000	210,000
 Total -----	 450,000	 400,000	 330,000

<sup>1</sup> Adjusted since publication of 1956 estimates.

The significant points that these estimates bring out are that the number of tuberculosis cases under current supervision by health departments is much larger than the annual number of newly reported cases, and that the number of active cases on registers has been reduced in recent years somewhat more rapidly than the number of "other" cases.