

LIV TB

Liverpool TB Research Group



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Friday 28th Feb, 1-2pm, Nuffield Lecture Theatre



Multi-drug resistant tuberculosis in Uzbekistan: The role of MSF and the challenges of conducting a large, randomised control trial (TBPRACTECAL) in a LMIC setting

Dr Ffion Carlin is a clinical research fellow in infectious diseases, HIV and sexual health currently working in the centre for Clinical Research in Infection and Sexual Health at UCL Institute of Global Health. Dr Carlin's research interests are in lung disease post-TB infection, diagnostics in recurrent TB, and the immunological spectrum of TB infection.

From March 2018 until October 2019, Ffion was in Uzbekistan, Central Asia working for the humanitarian organisation Medecins Sans Frontiers (MSF) on a large multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) health delivery project alongside a randomised control trial (RCT) looking at novel, all oral, shorter regimens for MDR-TB (TBPRACTECAL). More recent developments in TB diagnostics and the availability of new and repurposed treatments for rifampicin resistant and MDR-TB have led to improved treatment outcomes. Despite this, treatment still takes 9-24 months to complete.

Uzbekistan ranks in the top 20 countries with the highest burden of TB and MDR-TB. Additionally, due to being a former Soviet state, it is still developing its healthcare infrastructure, and geographically has several hard-to-reach communities. MSF have been the only international NGO present in Uzbekistan for over 20 years with projects for TB, HIV and Hepatitis treatment. Due to the burden of TB in this area and patient need, MSF chose Uzbekistan as one of its main sites for the RCT TBPRACTECAL. No clinical trial of its kind, or scale, has been previously done in Uzbekistan in collaboration with multiple international organisations. Differing country rules, regulations, geography, and a research-naïve population with a proud culture brought multiple logistical challenges.