



# PRESS STATEMENT

PNG MEDICAL SYMPOSIUM 2012

IMR14/12  
4 September 2012

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## PULMONARY TUBERCULOSIS: PREDICTING OUTCOMES

Sputum culture is the gold standard for diagnosing and monitoring pulmonary tuberculosis (PTB),ö said Dr Paul Harino, a researcher with IMR in Goroka.

öHere in PNG, using sputum culture with the most recent diagnostic tools is very expensive and therefore a cheaper and more reliable tool is required,ö Dr Harino said.

öTo assist with finding a cheap, reliable diagnostic tool, we studied predictors of PTB treatment outcome in HIV positive and HIV negative patients in Madang Province,ö he said.

öWe enrolled 270 people aged 15 and over through the TB clinic at the Modilon General Hospital, Madang Province.

öThe study included both HIV positive and HIV negative people and we looked at the time it took for the sputum to be free of TB germ, weight gain and other clinical markers to predict the results of treatment.

“Only minor side effects of TB treatment and the TB/HIV combined treatments were observed. However, persisting symptoms and signs at two months, positive sputum microscopy for TB at five months and failure to gain at least 5% of body weight at the end of treatment were independent predictors of poor PTB treatment outcome.

“We recommend that a combination of clinical evaluation on routine monthly follow up, sputum smear microscopy results and evaluation of body weight gain during the PTB treatment be used to predict PTB treatment outcome. Where sputum culture is available, it should be done to complement these predictors,ö Dr Harino said.

**Symposium Paper:** Predictors of treatment outcome for adult pulmonary tuberculosis in Madang Province.

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