Abstract

Background: Immigration is a fairly recent phenomenon in Spain and there are still few scientific publications on tuberculosis (TB) and immigration. Therefore, the aim of this study is to describe the differential characteristics of TB in the immigrant population with respect to natives in Spain. Methods: Literature review of original articles written in Spanish or English and published 1998-2012 about TB among immigrant population. The articles with the key words “Tuberculosis”, “immigrants” and “Spain” were included. Literature search was performed in Medline and MEDES. Results: A total of 72,087 articles on TB were detected worldwide, 6% of them dealt with the immigration issue. Regarding Spain we found 2,917 articles representing 4% of the papers published worldwide, and in 219 (7.5%) immigration was considered. Of the 219 articles, 48% were published in Spanish journals and the 52% remaining in Anglo-Saxon journals. 93.5% of immigrants with TB were younger than 51, whereas this percentage was 64.9% in natives. Drug resistance can be seen in 7.8% of the immigrant population but in only 3.8% of natives. It was also detected that the unavailability of a health card could be a problem. Conclusion: Immigrants with TB were characterized by being younger and having more drug resistance and coming mostly from Latin America, Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia. It was also detected that the unavailability of a health card could be a problem.

Keywords

Tuberculosis. Immigrants. Spain.