LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

On the Article “Resistant Mycobacterium tuberculosis Strains From Immigrants in the Community of Madrid: Current Assessment”

To the Editor: We read with interest the article by Sanz Barbero and Blasco Hernández,1 on the current situation with regard to resistant strains of Mycobacterium tuberculosis in immigrants in the Community of Madrid, which was published in Archivos de Bronconeumología. We would like to offer a few comments. As we understand it, the 221 strains isolated with a sensitivity analysis on which the study was based are from immigrants. Of the 31 resistant strains, 24 (12.6%) involved resistance in new cases and 6 (27.3%) resistance in previously treated cases.

We disagree with the authors when they state that the rates of resistance among new cases from immigrants is lower than that of the autochthonous population and 13.9% for immigrants (Resistance in new cases was found in 3.2% of the Spanish population and 13.9% of immigrants. Resistance in previously treated cases was found in 6.7% of the Spanish population and 0% of immigrants.). It is clear that there is a greater rate of resistance to M tuberculosis in immigrant patients than in autochthonous patients. Owing to the rising number of immigrant cases and the gradual integration of this population group in Spanish society for various reasons (domestic work, employment in the service sector, schools, health service, social services, etc), it is reasonable to expect strains of M tuberculosis to be transmitted from the immigrant population to the autochthonous population and vice versa. A nationwide study would tell us exactly where we stand with M tuberculosis resistance.
