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Improved diagnosis of pleural tuberculosis using the microscopic-observation drug-susceptibility technique.

Tovar M, Siedner MJ, Gilman RH, Santillan C, Caviedes L, Valencia T, Jave O, Escombe AR, Moore DA, Evans CA.

Tests for pleural tuberculosis are insensitive and expensive. We compared nonproprietary microscopic-observation drug-susceptibility (MODS) culture with Löwenstein-Jensen culture for evaluation of pleural specimens. MODS culture was associated with greatly increased diagnostic sensitivity and shorter time to diagnosis, compared with Löwenstein-Jensen culture (sensitivity of culture of biopsy specimens, 81% vs. 51%; time to diagnosis, 11 days vs. 24 days; $P < .001$). The MODS technique is inexpensive, allows drug-susceptibility testing, and is a considerably improved diagnostic method for pleural tuberculosis.

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