

potentially eradicable,<sup>3</sup> TB remains endemic in disadvantaged US populations such as migrant farm workers.

Previous studies have shown the prevalence of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* infection to range from 37% to 48% among migrants working in Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia.<sup>4</sup> We found an even higher prevalence of *M tuberculosis* infection among migrants in Franklin County, Pennsylvania, in 1988.

**Study.**—For screening, we chose a convenience sample of migrants living in the two largest camps. Of the 138 camp residents, 78 (57%) were interviewed. Of the 78 interviewed, 5 (6%) had a history of TB or positive skin test results and were not tested. The remaining 73 migrants were given 5 U of purified protein derivative intradermally and were assessed 48 hours later for reactions. Two patients were unavailable for follow-up. Of the remaining 71 migrants, 37 (52%) had induration of greater than 5 mm at the injection site, indicative of *M tuberculosis* infection.

As expected, the prevalence of *M tuberculosis* infection increased with age (Table). The 47% prevalence of infection among persons aged 15 to 34 years is particularly striking and is similar to results reported for Virginia in 1984.<sup>3</sup>

Of 18 migrants from Caribbean islands, 15 (83%) had positive skin test results compared with 18 (46%) of 39 African-American patients born in the United States and 3 (27%) of 11 Mexican migrants. The prevalence of positive skin test results remained higher among Caribbean migrants after stratification for age (Mantel-Haenszel weighted relative risk, 2.0; 95% confidence interval, 1.2 to 2.5). Males and females had similar rates of infection.

**Comment.**—These data confirm earlier reports of high prevalence of TB infection among migrant farm workers. If untreated, the high prevalence of TB among young adults will ensure that this disease accompanies the migrant population into the future. Persistence of TB among this highly mobile population could make elimination of TB impossible in the nation as a whole. The special needs of migrants and their continued high prevalence of *M tuberculosis*

infection may require a major commitment of resources if this public health challenge is to be met.

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1. *Tuberculosis in the United States*. Atlanta, Ga: Centers for Disease Control; 1987. Dept of Health and Human Services publication (CDC) 88-8322.

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3. Tuberculosis among migrant farm workers—Virginia. *JAMA*. 1986;256:977-981. Leads From the MMWR.

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### Tuberculosis Among Migrant Farm Workers

*To the Editor.*—There were nearly 23 000 new cases of tuberculosis (TB) and more than 1600 TB deaths in the United States during 1987.<sup>1</sup> Although

*Mycobacterium tuberculosis* Infection Among Migrant Farm Workers in Franklin County, Pennsylvania, 1988

Age Group, y	No. of Migrants Tested	No. of Positive Test Results	Prevalence, %
0-14	7	0	0
15-34	30	14	47