

TUBERCULOSIS IN THE NORTH-WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE

L. W. OSBURN, M.B., B.Ch.

Union Health Department, Tuberculosis Section

During the period February to June 1955, mobile X-ray facilities were placed at the disposal of local authorities in the North-Western Cape Province for the detection of cases of pulmonary tuberculosis.

The area covered by the unit, is roughly a rectangle contained by the towns of Port Nolloth and Springbok in the north, Mamre and Wolseley in the south, the coast (with small fishing villages) in the west, and Porterville, Clanwilliam, Van Rhynsdorp and Bitterfontein in the East.

It was hoped that some comparison could be made between coastal and inland groups of people, but this was found to be statistically impracticable.

Unselected volunteers, of all ages and racial groups

and of both sexes, were X-rayed at their own request. The tour was neither intended nor designed as a survey. No attempt has therefore been made to compare the population X-rayed with population distributions reflected in census figures. X-ray totals have not been set out to represent population samples, and it is not suggested that the findings reported reflect the prevalence rates of tuberculosis in the area.

Analysis of the findings have been made on the basis of 10-year age-groups. Five-year groups would have been preferable, but it was observed that confusion existed regarding their ages on the part of non-Europeans, even apparently intelligent and often educated non-Europeans. For the majority of non-Europeans,

TABLE I. CLASSIFICATION OF CASES INTO TYPE OF DISEASE PROCESS BY RACE AND AGE

Age Group years	European				Coloured				Native			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
0—9	—	—	—	—	0	0	0	0	—	—	—	—
10—19	—	2	4	3	3	14	99	26	—	—	5	—
20—29	—	3	4	2	3	10	127	70	4	1	23	2
30—39	—	4	4	1	2	14	84	35	5	2	18	—
40—49	—	1	5	—	5	10	79	16	—	2	13	—
50—59	—	1	4	1	1	1	59	9	1	—	6	—
60—69	—	1	3	—	2	1	44	6	—	—	3	—
70+	—	—	2	—	2	—	30	3	—	—	—	—
TOTALS	0	12	26	7	18	50	522	165	10	5	68	2
PERCENTAGE	0	26.7	57.8	15.5	2.4	6.6	69.1	21.9	11.8	5.9	79.9	2.4

1. Pleural effusion.
3. Tuberculous densities.

2. Primary or minimal lesion.
4. Densities with cavitation.

