Letters

Tuberculosis: Still a Global Challenge

I enjoyed in January’s issue of Microbe Bernard Dixon’s very graphic description of having had probable tuberculosis as a child. In particular, he wonderfully highlighted the horror of haemoptysis and both the bewilderment and suspicion of those looking after him. It reminded me very much of memories of my own father managing cases of tuberculosis in rural Ireland many years back as a public health doctor. Then it was a dreaded disease, consumption, with an enormous stigma attached, resulting in isolation and even condemnation. While some things have improved, such as the availability of antimicrobial chemotherapy, tuberculosis remains a global challenge and the most vulnerable and deprived are at greatest risk.

Those in educational roles would do well to remind students of its global importance as well as its many protean manifestations, sometimes resulting in it going undiagnosed. Our daughter’s current bedtime reading is L. M. Montgomery’s Ann of the Island in which the tragic case of Ruby Gillis is graphically described, dying of consumption, not having the chance to marry her beloved Herb. In many ways, that and Bernard Dixon’s imagery help remind us all of this great scourge in a more real way than the descriptions in textbooks or journals.

Hilary Humphreys
The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland and Beaumont Hospital
Dublin, Ireland.

Corrections

In the May 2015 Microbe, p. 201, in the profile of Jennifer Glass, at the bottom of column 1, “Geoffery” should read “Geoffrey.” On p. 202, column 2, line 2, after Jennifer Glass, Bradley Tebo should be included as a co-chair of the “Metals and Microbes” symposium from the 2014 ASM General Meeting. Microbe regrets the errors.