Low numbers of TB patients co-infected with HIV have been reported so far in the Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs), but TB-HIV co-infection is an emerging threat.

Surveillance of HIV in TB patients is therefore crucial in order to assess the need for collaboration between HIV and TB programmes on formulation and implementation of a joint TB/HIV strategy and to provide information on the HIV epidemic. HIV prevalence among TB patients is a sensitive indicator of the spread of HIV into the general population. WHO-recommended surveillance methods include periodic cross-sectional HIV seroprevalence surveys and data from routine care of TB patients.

Organisation of surveys has proved to be complicated, with the main limitations of a recent survey having been lack of time of staff, legislation and ethical issues, and logistical issues.

On the other side, data from routine care of TB patients are also scarce; in most PICTs much less than half of all TB patients were tested for HIV in 2007, the main barriers being lack of clear HIV testing policies, lack of trained counsellors, irregular supplies of HIV-testing reagents, high workload of staff, and lack of adequate space.

Thus, ways to improve surveillance of HIV in TB- and HIV-testing uptake need to be found, and the introduction of a provider-initiated testing and counselling policy should be considered in all PICTs.