INTRODUCTION

Despite considerable efforts and quite early initiated anti-tuberculosis (TB) actions, Lithuania still remains one of the European Union (EU) countries with the highest tuberculosis rates. According to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, an estimated number of 323,000 new TB cases and relapses occurred in countries of the World Health Organization European Region in 2015, equivalent to 35.5 cases per 100,000 population. About 85% of incident TB cases in 2015 occurred in the 18 high-priority countries including Lithuania.

OBJECTIVE

In this article we present the Lithuanian anti-tuberculosis action history review.

METHODS

Literature review was performed by using documents available in the Martynas Mažvydas Library’s resource, articles of foreign authors and archival materials.

RESULTS

Vigorous action in the fight against tuberculosis was launched in Lithuania in 1911. At that time a meeting was convened in Kaunas where it was decided to establish a division of the recently created All-Russian League for Fighting Against Tuberculosis. In 1914 Association activities were terminated due to the war. In 1921, in the first Congress of Lithuanian doctors it was decided to set up Society for Combating Tuberculosis. The society in its activities followed the practice of other countries.

In Lithuania 1924 tuberculin tests were performed in the Kaunas City Municipality Tuberculosis Dispensary. In 1925 the Pirquet tests were performed in the Kaunas which showed that about 80 percent of the children aged 7-14 were infected with tuberculosis.

In 1891 first sanatorium-summerhouse was built in Lithuania by military doctor Paskevicius near the Kazlu Ruda railway station. One of the main objectives of the Society was to isolate incurable patients. Colonies should be established in Alytus, Utena with capacities of each for 15 patients.

The first tuberculosis hospital was opened in Lithuania in 1923 as division of the Kaunas State Hospital. In 1926 the hospital with functionary surgery clinic was available to tuberculosis patients, patients with bone tuberculosis were referred to this Hospital.

In Lithuania reporting of the tuberculosis cases started in 1926. In 1933 The law for combating contagious diseases was passed, which enabled reporting of tuberculosis cases to the municipality, but its execution has not been controlled.

In 1935 Kaunas was the first to start the BCG vaccination. Three children of the mothers with tuberculosis were vaccinated at the time of delivery.

Lithuania has introduced Directly Observed Treatment, Short Course in 1999, and from 2007 it has been working in accordance with the requirements of this strategy.

CONCLUSIONS

Despite considerable efforts and quite early initiated anti-TB actions, Lithuania still remains one of the EU countries with the highest tuberculosis rates.