



Widal Test in Diagnosing Typhoid in India

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The widespread use of the **Widal test for diagnosing typhoid in India** has raised concerns about its accuracy and implications for public health management.

- The **Widal test**, a **rapid blood test**, is extensively used in India for diagnosing typhoid fever, despite its limitations and propensity for erroneous results.
- Typhoid, caused by ***Salmonella typhi* bacteria**, spreads through **contaminated food and water**, presenting as enteric fever with symptoms like **high fever, stomach pain, weakness, nausea, vomiting, and rash**.
 - Some carriers **may remain asymptomatic**, shedding bacteria for months. Untreated, it can be life-threatening, mimicking other diseases like [malaria](#) and [influenza](#).
- The gold standard for diagnosing typhoid involves **isolating the bacteria from a patient's blood or bone marrow and growing them in the lab**, which is resource-intensive and time-consuming.
- The **Widal test detects antibodies against the bacteria but can yield false positives and negatives** due to various factors such as **prior antibiotic treatment and cross-reactivity** with antibodies from other infections or vaccinations.
 - Misdiagnosis of typhoid can lead to delayed treatment and complications, contributing to the obscured **burden of the disease in India**.
- Overuse of antibiotics driven by the Widal test contributes to [antimicrobial resistance \(AMR\)](#), posing a significant public health threat.
- Improved access to diagnostics and AMR surveillance is vital for addressing typhoid challenges.

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