Call for Symposium Proposals

Theme:

Pulmonary Fungal Disease: Chronic Pulmonary Aspergillosis and Invasive Pulmonary Fungal Infections

The Union World Conference on Lung Health 2026 invites symposium proposals on chronic pulmonary aspergillosis (CPA) and invasive pulmonary fungal infections (IPFIs), neglected but devastating complications of pulmonary tuberculosis (TB) and other chronic lung diseases.

Background

CPA is a progressive lung condition caused by Aspergillus infection in individuals with pre-existing structural lung damage, most often following TB. Globally, CPA affects an estimated three million people, with TB as the most important risk factor. Post-TB cavities and chronic lung impairment provide an environment for Aspergillus colonisation, leading to progressive respiratory decline, hemoptysis, and increased risk of death.

Similarly, invasive pulmonary fungal infections—including invasive aspergillosis and other emerging fungal pathogens—pose a rapidly growing challenge, particularly among individuals with immunosuppression, HIV co-infection, or severe post-TB lung disease. In many high-burden settings, IPFIs are misdiagnosed as smear-negative TB or bacterial pneumonia due to limited access to diagnostic tests such as antigen assays, molecular tools, or advanced imaging. As a result, people often experience delayed treatment, accelerated respiratory decline, and preventable mortality.

Despite these serious consequences, both CPA and invasive fungal infections remain underdiagnosed and underreported, especially in low- and middle-income countries where TB burden is highest. Limited access to reliable serology, imaging, and antifungal therapy compounds the problem, resulting in significant disability and death among TB survivors. As TB survival improves, fungal infections pose an urgent threat to long-term outcomes and global lung health.

Why CPA and Invasive Fungal Infections at the Union Conference 2026?

The Union Conference has increasingly emphasised post-TB health, respiratory comorbidities, and mycotic lung infections. CPA sits at the intersection of these themes and remains the central focus of this call. Expanding the scope to include invasive pulmonary fungal infections provides an opportunity to:

1. Bring together experts in TB, mycology, pulmonology, infectious diseases, and global health.
2. Stimulate innovation in diagnosis, treatment, and policy responses across the spectrum of fungal lung diseases.
3. Ensure the voices of TB survivors and people affected by CPA and IPFIs are integrated into lung health agendas.

Symposium focus areas

We welcome proposals addressing (but not limited to):

- Epidemiology and global burden of CPA, with extended focus on invasive pulmonary fungal infections, especially in high TB-burden regions.
- Diagnostic innovations: serology, molecular methods, imaging approaches, and point-of-care tools suitable for resource-limited settings.
- Therapeutic challenges: antifungal access, stewardship, drug–drug interactions, toxicity management, and the role of surgery.
- Personal perspectives: lived experiences of CPA and invasive fungal disease after TB.
- Policy and programmatic integration: embedding fungal disease screening and management into national TB, lung health, and antimicrobial resistance strategies.

Proposal guidelines

Each symposium should be 90 minutes, with 3–4 presentations (15 minutes each) and ample time for discussion. Proposals must clearly state:

1. Symposium title.
2. Rationale and objectives.

3. Suggested speakers and affiliations (diversity across geography, gender, and expertise is encouraged).
4. Expected outcomes and contributions to advancing CPA and pulmonary fungal infection research, policy, or practice.

Proposals that include people affected by TB and/or community advocates, early-career researchers, or LMIC-based scholars are especially encouraged.

Expected outcomes

Through this expanded focus, we aim to:

- Raise awareness of CPA as a major contributor to post-TB morbidity and mortality while strengthening recognition of invasive pulmonary fungal infections.
- Foster cross-disciplinary collaboration between TB, mycology, and respiratory communities.
- Highlight practical solutions for diagnosis and treatment of fungal lung diseases in LMICs.
- Inspire research, funding, and policy action that integrates fungal infections into the wider lung health and TB elimination agenda.