Newly diagnosed pulmonary tuberculosis patients (72 sputum specimens)

**BLEACH STERILIZATION ASSESSMENT (31 sputum specimens)**

- Sputum sodium hydroxide decontamination
- Sputum treated with 4 bleach concentrations & 4 exposure times
- Culture to assess *M. tuberculosis* sterilization

**BLEACH-SEDIMENTATION ASSESSMENT (41 sputum specimens)**

- Pilot experiments to select optimal bleach-sedimentation technique (16 sputum specimens)
- Quantitative evaluation of selected bleach-sedimentation technique (25 sputum specimens)
  - Triplicate conventional sputum conventional-smears
  - Triplicate smears of bleach-sedimented sputum
  - Quantification of acid-fast bacilli, slide reading time & inter-observer agreement