

Webinar launch

WHO guideline on control and elimination of human schistosomiasis

15 February 2022

14:00–15:15 CET

Human schistosomiasis is a public health problem in tropical and subtropical regions of Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and South America that prevails among low-income populations worldwide.

Approximately 779 million people are at risk of acquiring schistosome infection. In 2020, around 241 million required preventive chemotherapy.

Schistosomiasis mostly affects poor and rural communities, particularly agricultural and fishing populations. Women doing domestic chores in infested water, such as washing clothes, are also at risk and can develop female genital schistosomiasis. Inadequate hygiene and contact with infected water make children especially vulnerable to infection.

Migration to urban areas and population movements are introducing the disease to new areas. Increasing population size and the corresponding needs for power and water often result in development schemes, and environmental modifications facilitate transmission.

WHO's road map for 2021–2030 targets the elimination of schistosomiasis as a public health problem in all endemic countries and the interruption of transmission in selected countries.

This new guideline aims to support Member States, programme managers, health workers and other stakeholders in implementing national programmes to control and eliminate human schistosomiasis by providing evidence-based recommendations in the following areas:

- prevalence thresholds;
- target age groups and frequency of preventive chemotherapy;
- establishment of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and snail control activities to support control and elimination; and
- diagnostic tests for the assessment of *Schistosoma* infection in animal reservoirs, in snail hosts and in humans.

The objective of this webinar is to formally launch the guideline and its new recommendations, which are expected to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the road map targets for 2030.

Audience

The audience of this webinar will be policymakers, national neglected tropical disease (NTD) control programmes and national NTD task forces in health ministries, regional programme review groups and partners.

The webinar

The webinar will consist of three sessions, with presentations, videos and comments, on: the process used to develop the guideline; the views of global experts; and the changes implied for programme implementers and the support needed from partners (alliances, nongovernmental organizations, pharmaceutical companies and international development agencies).

Speakers

Session 1

Process used to develop the guideline and summary of the new recommendations

In this section, the Chair of the guideline development group will explain the composition of the group, the process for developing the guideline and the rationale for the new recommendations. The WHO focal point for schistosomiasis will present the recommendations of the guideline, which include preventive chemotherapy for all risk groups, treatment in hot spots, and the importance of WASH and snail control activities and the use of diagnostic tools for verification of elimination.

Session 2

Views of WHO regional offices and national programme managers

This section will focus on support for dissemination of the guideline and capacity-building to facilitate implementation by NTD programme managers in endemic countries. Discussion will also focus on translation, training, local adaptation and situations specific to regions.

Session 3

Partnership for implementation of the guideline to achieve road map targets

This section will hear from partners about the support needed to achieve the road map targets for schistosomiasis, namely the Global Schistosomiasis Alliance, pharmaceutical companies and nongovernmental agencies supporting implementation, and donor agencies (United States Agency for International Development). The comments will support research and mobilize donations of medicines and other resources for implementation.

Webinar format

This moderated webinar will involve live discussions, short videos and voices from experts.

Duration: 75 minutes

Languages: English and French, with simultaneous interpretation.