



Memorandum

Date December 30, 1988



From WHO Collaborating Center for
Research, Training, and Control of Dracunculiasis

Subject GUINEA WORM WRAP-UP #22

To Addressees



INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL GRANT TO NIGERIA'S ANAMBRA STATE



The Rotary Foundation of Rotary International has announced a grant in the amount of \$300,000 to the guinea worm eradication program in Anambra State, Nigeria. The grant, which is to be disbursed over a three-year period, is made under the Foundation's Health, Hunger, and Humanity program. It is intended to help the Anambra State Ministry of Health and affected communities to construct rainwater catchment reservoirs in schools, health institutions, and other places for communal village activities in endemic areas of the state.

TASK FORCE FOR DISEASE ERADICATION FORMED

An International Task Force for Disease Eradication has been established at The Carter Center of Emory University in Atlanta through a two-year grant of \$370,000 from the Charles A. Dana Foundation, a private philanthropic foundation located in New York City. The Task Force's primary goals are to promote the eradication of guinea worm and polio and to systematically evaluate other diseases as to their actual or potential eradicability. The Task Force will be headed by Drs. William Foege and Donald Hopkins of the Carter Center.

U.S. PEACE CORPS JOINS ATTACK ON GUINEA WORM

The U.S. Peace Corps announced in October its intention to enlist more of its volunteers in the struggle against guinea worm in Africa. Peace Corps health and water resource volunteers have been active already in this program in Africa, especially in association with USAID- and UNICEF-funded rural water supply projects in Togo and Benin. New volunteers have begun work in Ghana and Cameroon. The goal is to mobilize up to 10 such volunteers in each endemic African country where Peace Corps is active. Peace Corps Director



Loret Miller Ruppe praised the international drive to eradicate dracunculiasis: "I am pleased that Peace Corps volunteers have joined the concerted effort to rid the planet of the guinea worm. By having volunteers join host governments, other U.S. agencies, and the international development organizations already working, I am confident that together, we can eliminate the guinea worm."

U.S. CONGRESSIONAL LETTER TO AID

In October, 16 Members of the U.S. Congress sent a letter to the Administrator of AID to urge the foreign assistance agency to "more actively support efforts to eradicate the guinea worm disease (dracunculiasis)". The letter pointed out that "The House Foreign Affairs Committee included language calling for the eradication of guinea worm disease as a development priority in its 1988 authorization legislation," as a result of the hearing on guinea worm held in March 1987 by the House Select Committee on Hunger. The congressmen encouraged AID "to exert crucial leadership in the international campaign to eradicate this horrible disease."



EMRO REGIONAL DRACUNCULIASIS MEETING

The dates of the first meeting on dracunculiasis of relevant countries from WHO's Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office have been set for April 2-4, 1989, at Islamabad, Pakistan. Representatives of Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen are expected to attend, as well as the host country of Pakistan.

NATIONAL ACTIVITIES



BENIN

The first national conference on dracunculiasis was held in Cotonou on December 13-15, 1988. Sponsored by the Ministry of Public Health in collaboration with WHO, UNICEF, and USAID, the conference reviewed the status of dracunculiasis and control measures being taken against the disease in Benin, reviewed the problems and resources needed to combat the disease, and adopted a national plan of action which calls for the elimination of dracunculiasis from Benin by 1992. Participants included representatives from the Benin Ministry of Equipment and Transport, the Ministry of Rural Development and Cooperative Action, the Ministry of Information and Communication, and the Ministry of Work and Social Affairs, as well as other national agencies. Also in attendance were invited observers from Togo, Nigeria, and Ghana.

INDIA

Provisional results from the first 1988 active search suggest that the Guinea Worm Eradication Program has achieved a further reduction of about

31% in the number of cases, compared to the previous year. The number of cases found during the active search in June 1988 was 9,775, compared to 14,296 at the same time in 1987. (The final total of cases for 1987 was 17,031). Only 12 cases were found in Gujarat State this June, whereas 101 cases were found there in June 1987. The report from the National Institute of Communicable Diseases notes that Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat have now provided at least one safe source of drinking water in all the guinea worm affected villages in those two states.

NIGERIA

All 22 states in Nigeria have formed task forces for guinea worm eradication and, by the end of December, all but one state, Bendel, had completed training for their village-by-village active search for cases of guinea worm. The first national search for cases is expected to be completed in January 1989. The results will be reviewed at the Second National Conference on Dracunculiasis in Nigeria, which is being planned for March 20-22, 1984 in Lagos. The first issue of the newsletter of the Nigerian national guinea worm eradication program, "GUINEAWORM REPORT," was issued in September. The informative newsletter, which will be issued twice yearly, is edited by Dr. Eka Braide of the University of Calabar.

PAKISTAN

Only 148 villages have been found to have cases of guinea worm in 1988 (86 in Sind, 44 in Punjab, 18 in NWFP), with a provisional total of 1,070 cases reported thus far in 1988 (vs. an estimated total of 1,606 cases in 1987). A total of 462 villages have been under intensified surveillance in 1988, having been found to have had one or more active cases within the past two years. Over 34,000 filters and nearly 1,000 liters of temephos (Abate) have been distributed by the program, with priority to those villages where active cases were found this year. A validation survey is being conducted in December to help evaluate the sensitivity of the ongoing surveillance system.

VIDEOTAPE AVAILABLE IN FRENCH



The film, "Guinea Worm: The Fiery Serpent," is now available on videotape in French and in English, in either VHS-NTSC or PAL format. Single copies of the videotape, which is not copyrighted, may be obtained for US \$15.00 from: UNDP, Division of Information, One United Nations Plaza, Room DC1-1904, New York, NY 10017. Telephone: (212) 906-5318.

RESEARCH: LOCALLY AVAILABLE FILTER MATERIAL

Researchers in Ghana and at the Centers for Disease Control have tested samples of cotton "baft" material available locally in Ghanaian markets for its ability to retain copepods, the intermediate vectors of dracunculiasis. On microscopic examination, the pore size was found to be

approximately 200 microns, but somewhat variable. It proved to be quite effective in removing those copepod stages most likely to contain infective guinea worm larvae. During testing in Ghana, the material withstood numerous repeated filterings and washings. The one area of potential concern is that the rate of filtration may be relatively slow, compared to monofilament nylon or polyester filter material. The potential advantage, of course, is that this material is widely available at local markets in Africa, and does not require foreign exchange to purchase. In theory, at least, this could put the cost of eradicating guinea worm within the means of every endemic village, even the poorest ones.

MARCH 31 REPORTING DEADLINE

Readers are reminded that the second African regional meeting at Accra recommended that countries should report their annual number of cases of dracunculiasis to WHO by March 31st of the following year. Thus, the time for reporting 1988 cases of the disease is fast approaching. As interest in helping to eradicate dracunculiasis increases, so does the importance of prompt reporting from all endemic countries, however incomplete that data may be. This is especially true for the 1988 calendar year, since dracunculiasis eradication will be discussed again at the World Health Assembly in Geneva in May 1989. A list of data reported to WHO by the end of March 1989 will be compiled and publicized widely. Don't let your country be late!!



RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Eberhard ML, Ruiz-Tiben E, Wallace SV, 1988. *Dracunculus insignis*: experimental infection in the ferret, *Mustela putorius furo*. J Helminthol 62:265-270.

Sehgal S, Sharma RS, Kaul SM, 1988. Current status of guinea worm eradication programme in India. Communicable Diseases Bulletin (Delhi) 5:1-17.

World Health Organization, 1988. *Dracunculiasis: Global surveillance summary - 1987*. Wkly Epidemiol Rec 63:375-379.



CDC is the WHO Collaborating Center for Research, Training, and Control of Dracunculiasis.