

Progress towards  
eliminating onchocerciasis  
in the WHO Region  
of the Americas: advances  
in mapping the Yanomami  
focus area

Progrès vers l'élimination  
de l'onchocercose dans  
la Région OMS des Amériques:  
progrès dans la cartographie  
de la zone du foyer Yanomami

Onchocerciasis (river blindness) is caused  
by the parasitic worm *Onchocerca volvulus*  
which is transmitted by *Simulium* species  
in rivers and streams. In the human host,  
the parasite becomes encapsulated in subcutaneous

nodules, from which it can be transmitted to  
the next human host via subsequent  
bites. The parasite has no environmental

reservoirs. In 1987, the World Bank and the  
World Health Organization supported a  
project to control or eliminate onchocerciasis  
in the Yanomami focus area in the  
Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and  
the state of Chiapas, Mexico.

The project aims to control or eliminate  
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The Yanomami focus area

7KH <)\$ LV WKH FURVV ERUGHU ]RQH RI RQFKRFHUFLDVLV  
WUDQVPLVLRQ FRPSULVLQJ WKH 6RXWK IRFXV RI WKH %ROLYDULDQ  
5HSXEOLF RI 9HQH]XHOD DQG WKH \$PD]RQDV IRFXV RI %UD]LO  
7KH <DQRPDPL DUH WKH QRPDGLF LQGLJHQRXV SHRSOH ZKR  
live in communities scattered over approximately  
230000 km<sup>2</sup> RI VDYDQQDK DQG \$PD]RQ UDLQIRUHVW DORQJ  
WKH ERUGHU EHWZHHQ WKH WZRGIERXQWULHV \$ERXW  
YLGXDOV OLYLQJ LQ "malocas" or YLOODJHV FDOOHG  
"malocas" DUH WDUJHWHG IRUHV\ \$ \HDU ,Q  
LYHUPHFVLQ WUHDWPHQWV ZHUH JLYHQ LQ WKH  
<)\$ DV WZLFH D \HDU WUHDWPHQW DQG  
WLPHV D \HDU WUHDWPHQW 7KH VXFFHVV ZLWK ZKLFK 0'\$  
UHDFKHG WKH WUHDWPHQW JRDO GHSHQGHG RQ ORFDWLRQ  
RI YLOODJHV WKH DYDLODELOLW\ RI UHVRXUFHV DQG LQIUDVWUXF  
WXUH LQFOXGLQJ DLU WUDQVSRUW DQG ODQGLQJ VWULSV <DQR  
PDPL PLJUDWRU\ SDWWHUQV DQG ZHDWKHU FRQGLWLRQV

,Q RUGHU WR DFKLHYH WKH SURJUDPPH\V GLVHDVH HOLPLQDWLRQ  
JRDOV VHYHUDO LQLWLDWLYHV ZHUH ODXQFKHG LQ  
LDQWKURSRORJLFDO VWXGLHV WR OHDUQ PRUH DERXW WKH  
Yanomami (mobility patterns and community sociopo  
OLWLFDO UHODWLRQV KLSV LL UHFUXLWPHQW DQG WUDLQLQJ RI  
PRUH LQGLJHQRXV KHDOWK DJHQWV ,+\$V WR KHOS SURYLGH  
ivermectin treatment and other health care; (iii) recovery  
DQG PDLQWHQDQFH RI DLUVWULSV LQ WKH 9HQH]XHODQ 6RXWK  
IRFXV DQG LY PHHWLQJV EHWZHHQ WKH QDWLRQDO  
SURJUDPPHV WR EHWWHU GHÀQH WKH RQFKRFHUFLDVLV HQGHPLF  
DUHD WR EH FRYHUHG \$Q DFFXUDWH SLFWXUH RI WKH <DQRPDPL  
SRSXODWLRQ WDUJHWHG IRU RQFKRFHUFLDVLV WUHDWPHQW ZDV  
GLIÀFXOW WR DFKLHYH DV WKHLU VHWWOHPHQWV DUH FKDQJLQJ  
constantly in composition and mobility. In 2017, the  
%UD]LOLDQ DQG 9HQH]XHODQ RQFKRFHUFLDVLV HOLPLQDWLRQ  
SURJUDPPHV DJUHHG RQ DQ HVVHQWLDQ XSGDWH DQG GHWDLOHG  
PDSV RI DOO FRPPXQLWLYHV LQ WKH <)\$ LQFOXGLQJ JHRJUDSK  
LFDO FRRUGLQDWHV WUHDWPHQW DQG HSLGHPLRORJLFDO GDWD  
vector species, health posts, airstrips and mobility  
SDWWHUQV ,Q RUGHU WR DPDOJDPDWH WKH GDWD FROOHFWHG  
WKURXJK WKH \HDUV E\ WKH SURJUDPPHV RQ ERWK VLGHV RI  
WKH ERUGHU WHFKQLFDO RQFKRFHUFLDVLV VWDII DQG JHRJUDSK  
LFDO LQIRUPDWLRQ V\WHP \*,6 H[SHUWV KHOG WZR PHHWLQJV  
LQ WR FKRRVH D FRPPRQ \*,6 SODWIRUP DQG WR XQL\  
WKHLU GDWD 7KH PHHWLQJV ZHUH KHOG LQ \*XDWHPDOD &LW\  
\*XDWHPDOD LQ -DQXDU\ DQG 5LR GH -DQHLUR %UD]LO LQ  
0DUFK 7KH PHHWLQJV UHVXOWHG LQ DQ XSGDWHG GDWDEDVH  
RI <)\$ FRPPXQLW\ FRRUGLQDWHV DQG WKHLU SUH 0'\$  
HQGHPLF OHYHO L H K\SR HQGHPLF EDVHOLQH PLFURÀODULDH  
SUHYDOHQFH <sup>2</sup> PHV HQGHPLF <sup>2</sup> DQG K\SHU  
HQGHPLF • 7KH PDS FOHDUO\ VKRZV WKDW WKH HSLFHQ  
WUH RI WKH <)\$ FURVVHV WKH LQWHUQDWLRQDO ERUGHU 7KH  
SURJUDPPHV FRPPLWWHG WKHPVHOYHV WR FRQLQXH  
FROODERUDWLRQ DQG FROOHFWLRQ DQG VKDULQJ RI GDWD DW OHDVW  
DQXDOO\ WR HQVXUH WKDW WKH MRLQW \*,6 SODWIRUP LV FRQLQ  
ually updated.

Editorial note

7KH FRPPRQ PDSSLQJ V\WHP XVHG WKLV \HDU LV DQ  
LPSRUWDQW QHZ WRRO IRU EUHDNLQJ WUDQVPLVLRQ DQG  
FRRUGLQDWLQJ WKH KDOWLQJ RI 0'\$ OPKQJ RI p0,



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