



Memorandum

Date January 31, 1983

From Dracunculiasis Group, CDC

Subject GUINEA WORM WRAP-UP - January 1983

To Addressees

Over the past 2 years, increasing attention has been paid to Dracunculus medinensis and dracunculiasis (guinea worm disease), largely because of the perceived opportunity for controlling or eradicating the disease during the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (1981-1990). The idea of establishing reduction of dracunculiasis as a sub-goal of the Decade in those countries where the disease still occurs was endorsed by the Steering Committee of the Decade (representatives of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Bank, the United Nations, the United Nations Children's Fund, the International Labour Organization, and the Food and Agriculture Organization) in April 1981 and in Resolution WHA 34.25, the resolution concerning the Decade which was adopted by the 34th World Health Assembly in Geneva in May 1981.

This informal memorandum is the beginning of an effort to summarize periodically information and news pertaining to dracunculiasis for interested persons around the world. It is intended to encourage communication and cooperation among persons working on some aspect of dracunculiasis and stimulate additional control and research activities. The editors would welcome letters in response, some of which will be published in future issues (address: Guinea Worm Wrap-Up, Centers for Disease Control, Building 1, Room 2122, Atlanta, Georgia 30333). News about control or research projects, published articles, published or unpublished surveillance data about the occurrence or extent of the disease, effect of interventions on the disease, effect of the disease on agricultural or other economic activities, etc., are avidly solicited.

1. Washington Workshop on Dracunculiasis

Leading authorities on dracunculiasis from around the world gathered in Washington, D.C. on June 16-19, 1982, for the first international meeting devoted to dracunculiasis, entitled A Workshop on Opportunities for Control of Dracunculiasis. The workshop was sponsored by the Board on Science and Technology for International Development of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and co-sponsored by the World Health Organization (WHO). Invited participants attended from Ghana, India, Nigeria, Togo, the United Kingdom, and the United States, as well as representatives from WHO headquarters, the African Regional Office of WHO, USAID, World Bank, and the OCCGE (Organization for the Coordination and

Cooperation in the Struggle Against the Great Endemic Diseases). The purposes of the workshop were to review the current state of knowledge about the disease, its epidemiology, prevention and control, and to make recommendations for future research priorities and other actions which would contribute to the prevention, treatment, control, and eradication of dracunculiasis. A Report of the meeting and Proceedings of the conference are being edited and should be available a little later this year.

2. Dracunculiasis Surveillance

A global summary of the reported dracunculiasis endemic areas was published in the 5 March 1982 issue of WHO's Weekly Epidemiological Record (57:65-7). Since then, much more information has become available about the status of the disease in India (see below). The Government of Iran also recently informed WHO that although the surveillance summary alluded to published reports of a residual focus which was described in southwestern Iran in 1971, in fact no cases of dracunculiasis have been reported in Iran during the past 5 years despite surveillance in former endemic areas.

3. News of the Indian Guinea Worm Eradication Programme

India's Guinea Worm Eradication Programme, which got underway in 1981, is aiming to eradicate dracunculiasis from India within 5 years. This multi-faceted effort, which is closely linked to that country's activities being undertaken during the Water and Sanitation Decade, also employs health education, active surveillance, and temporary chemical treatment of contaminated water sources in its attack. During the active search of all known endemic areas in the seven affected States in May-June 1982, 29,906 cases of dracunculiasis were enumerated. A summary of these data just appeared in the January 28, 1983, issue of the Weekly Epidemiological Record (vol. 58, No. 4).

4. AFRO to Provide Consultant to Three Countries

At the request of national authorities in Benin, Ivory Coast, and Togo, the African Regional Office of WHO is providing a short-term consultant epidemiologist from CDC to those three countries beginning in early February this year. The consultant is charged to help develop national plans for control or eradication of dracunculiasis in those countries, in the context of other Water and Sanitation Decade activities.

5. OCCGE Studies

In 1982, the OCCGE began sponsoring a study comparing the efficacy of health education and provision of safe drinking water for control of dracunculiasis in two villages of Upper Volta, with the financial assistance of USAID/Strengthening Health Delivery Systems through AFRO/WHO. Comparable studies are being considered in Ivory Coast and Niger. Dracunculiasis will be one of two secondary themes for discussion at the 23rd OCCGE Technical Conference in Ouagadougou from April 11 to 14, 1983.

6. Recent Publications

The following recent publications are commended to your attention:

World Health Organization. Dracunculiasis Surveillance - India. Wkly Epidem Rec 1983;58: No.4 (28 January).

World Health Organization. Dracunculiasis Surveillance. Wkly Epidem Rec 1982;57:65-7.

Nwosu ABC, Ifezulike EO, Anya AO. Endemic dracontiasis in Anambra State of Nigeria: geographical distribution, clinical features, epidemiology and socioeconomic impact of the disease. Ann Trop Med Parasit 1982;76:187-200.

Rao CK, Paul RC, Sharma MID, et al. Guinea worm disease in India: current status and strategy of its eradication. J Commun Dis (Delhi) 1981;13:1-7.

Akpovi SU, Johnson DC, Brieger WR. Guinea worm control: testing the efficacy of health education in primary care. Int J Hlth Ed 1981;24:229-37.

Bourne PG. Global eradication of guinea worm. J Roy Soc Med 1982;75:1-3.

Brieger WR, Johnson DC, Adeniyi JD, et al. Complexities of guinea worm disease. Wrld Hlth Forum 1982;3:216-7.

Johnson S, Joshi V. Dracontiasis in Rajasthan VI. Epidemiology of Dracontiasis in Barmer District. Int J Epid 1982;11:26-30.

Abolarin MO. Guinea worm infection in a Nigerian village. Trop Geogr Med 1981;33:83-8.

Macpherson CNL. The existence of Dracunculus medinensis (Linnaeus, 1758) in Turkana, Kenya. Trans Roy Soc Trop Med Hyg 1981;75:680-1.

After Smallpox, Guineaworm? The Lancet, Jan. 22, 1983, p. 161-2.

7. Teaching Materials

An excellent teaching slide collection on dracunculiasis is available from Teaching Aids at Low Cost (TALC) (Address: Foundation for Teaching Aids at Low Cost, Institute of Child Health, 30 Guilford Street, London WC1N 1EH, ENGLAND).

An especially well-done color movie, Avicenna's Thread, is available from J.P.R. Productions, 5 rue Broussais, Paris, France 75014 (available in English).