



EDİTÖRE MEKTUP / LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Assessment of the progress made in the prevention and control of neglected tropical diseases

İhmal edilen tropikal hastalıkların önlenmesinde ve kontrolünde kaydedilen ilerlemenin değerlendirilmesi

Saurabh RamBihariLal Shrivastava¹, Prateek Saurabh Shrivastava¹

¹Shri Sathya Sai Medical College & Research Institute, Department of Community Medicine, Kancheepuram

Cukurova Medical Journal 2018;43(Suppl 1):320-321

To the Editor,

Neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) are a group of diverse diseases, most of which have affected humans for centuries together, have a strong linkage with poverty, and usually thrive in impoverished tropical settings^{1,2}. Most of the NTDs have gradually reduced in numbers and even their geographical distribution has regressed due to the development of the nations, and improvement in the living conditions & hygiene¹. Moreover, these diseases are responsible for disfigurement, disability, incapacitation of the affected individuals, and play an important role in the aggravation of social discrimination^{1,2}.

As a matter of fact, these diseases persists in the regions with poor housing standards, restricted access to safe water & sanitation facilities, prolonged hunger, dirty environment and with plentiful vector species². However, owing to the fact that more than 1 billion people are affected by the diseases, persistent efforts have been taken to reduce the incidence of the disease¹. In-fact, the caseload attributed to these NTDs has decreased drastically, especially because of better treatment delivery³. It has been reported that more than a billion people received treatment in the year 2015, and that in the last decade, millions of people have been rescued from the adverse consequences¹.

It won't be wrong to say that significant progress has been made in the battle against NTDs, and that

is predominantly due to the strong political commitment, assistance from the donor agencies for the supply of effective medicines, streamlining the mechanism for the delivery of donated drugs, free delivery of the drugs, collaboration between local & international agencies, deployment of simple measures that are safe & can be administered by non-health personnel, expansion of care & long-term management services, and development of an evidence-based roadmap to attract more support to respond to the commonest NTDs¹⁻³. In addition, the attained growth cannot be sustained for long periods, unless the local community is involved and issues of stigma & ignorance are addressed^{3,4}.

Nevertheless, there is a great need to further escalate the response, and additional attention is required towards improving the water supply & sanitation facilities, strengthening of the vector control measures, expansion of preventive chemotherapy, adoption of innovative & intensified disease management strategies, and involvement of the veterinary sector^{3,4}. At the same time, there is a great necessity to respond to the existing challenges, namely inadequate financial support, weaker monitoring, supervision & surveillance activities, development of alternative drugs to deal with potential problems of loss of efficacy or emergence of resistance, expansion of health education activities, and involvement of all the concerned sectors for optimal results¹⁻⁵.

To conclude, despite making considerable progress

Yazışma Adresi/Address for Correspondence: Dr. Saurabh RamBihariLal Shrivastava, Shri Sathya Sai Medical College & Research Institute, Department of Community Medicine, Kancheepuram, India E-mail: drshrishri2008@gmail.com
Geliş tarihi/Received: 7.4.2017 Kabul tarihi/Accepted: 5.6.2017 Published online: 25.9.2018

towards the prevention and control of neglected tropical diseases, there is an immense need for stepping up the tested interventions and simultaneously being proactive to respond to the existing challenges.

REFERENCES

1. World Health Organization. The neglected tropical diseases: a rags-to-riches story; 2017. <http://who.int/publications/10-year-review/ntd/en/> (accessed April 2017)
2. Shrivastava SR, Shrivastava PS, Ramasamy J. Recommending measures to address the public health concern of neglected tropical diseases. *MAMC J Med Sci.* 2015;1:173-5.
3. World Health Organization. Unprecedented progress against neglected tropical diseases, WHO reports; 2017. <http://who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2017/ntd-report/en/> (accessed April 2017)
4. World Health Organization. Integrating neglected tropical diseases in global health and development - Fourth WHO report on neglected tropical diseases. Geneva: WHO press; 2017. p. 1-26.
5. Shrivastava SR, Shrivastava PS, Ramasamy J. Dearth in research & development of health products for responding to neglected diseases: An urgent public health need. *Ann Trop Med Public Health.* 2016;9:366-7.