



Introduction

Neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) are a group of bacterial and parasitic diseases that infect one in six people around the world, leading to declines in health, education and productivity. But, NTD control is also an important success factor in fighting other important diseases – notably HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

There are high rates of co-infection among NTDs, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, demonstrating the need for more research to identify the links between these diseases, as well as the opportunities for comprehensive programming to combine treatment interventions.



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How NTDs Impact HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

Presence of NTDs can impact the onset or progression of other diseases including HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

HIV/AIDS and NTDs

Women who suffered from female genital schistosomiasis (FGS) as children have three times the chance of contracting HIV than women without FGS. In Africa, nearly 16 million women are believed to be infected with FGS.

Intestinal worms also burden the immune system, causing those individuals who are infected with HIV and intestinal worms to have a lower response to T-cell treatments.

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Tuberculosis and NTDs

Individuals with any of the intestinal worm infections have a greater risk of developing active pulmonary tuberculosis. Intestinal worm infections have also been shown to reduce the effectiveness of tuberculosis treatments.

Malaria and NTDs

Like several NTDs, malaria causes anemia, which leads to increased health risks and mortality for those who are infected by both diseases. Anemia is a principal concern for pregnant women in developing countries, as it can cause low birth weights, premature births and lower child survival rates.

In addition, as many as 50 million school children may be co-infected with malaria and at least one NTD, leaving them more vulnerable to illness and death.

Combining Efforts

The high level of co-infection means that there are opportunities for integrated treatment programs.

Existing disease prevention methods, such as mosquito control and bednets, have positive impacts on the reduction of both malaria and lymphatic filariasis (elephantiasis), an NTD that is spread by the same species of mosquitoes as malaria in many areas.

Meanwhile, the average cost of the integrated NTD treatment regimen - approximately \$0.50 annually per person - means that it can easily be incorporated into cost-effective treatment programs for other diseases, improving efficiency in health care delivery.



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More Information

For more information, please visit www.globalnetwork.org.