

# Helminth control in school-age children

A guide for managers of control  
programmes

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Geneva

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# Preface

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This book is a guide for planners and programme managers in the health and education sectors who are responsible for implementing community-based programmes for control of soil-transmitted helminth (STH) and schistosome infections in school-age populations.

The book describes a common and cost-effective approach whereby periodic parasitological surveys in a sample of the school population are used to select the appropriate control strategy for the whole community. An alternative approach, which relies on individual diagnosis and treatment, has been used with success in the rapidly evolving economies of Japan and the Republic of Korea, but is not discussed here.

Key elements of guidelines previously published by WHO—*Guidelines for the evaluation of soil-transmitted helminthiasis and schistosomiasis at community level* (WHO, 1998) and *Monitoring helminth control programmes* (WHO, 1999c)—are brought together in this book, with a third component on planning and budgeting.

The book is intended to help managers to plan, implement, and monitor worm control programmes using methods based on the best current experience. It covers the following topics:

- programme design
- delivery of drugs to schools and treatment of children
- collection of data for programme evaluation
- obtaining the needed materials.

Users should note that the book is intended for guidance only; regional and national factors will influence actual control strategies. The illustrative examples in the book are provided as a means of sharing practical and specific experience: they will need to be adapted to local circumstances.

It is also important to understand that the helminths considered here are those that give rise to the greatest burden of disease, and for which there are field diagnostic techniques and control measures of proven cost-effectiveness (e.g. drugs that are inexpensive and efficacious and can be given as single doses). Consequently, control measures for organisms such as *Strongyloides stercoralis* and *Enterobius vermicularis* and for cestode infections are not discussed here. Strategies for controlling onchocerciasis and filariasis are also excluded since the extent of continuing worldwide elimination efforts ensure that these topics are adequately covered elsewhere. However, the integration of STH/schistosomiasis control with onchocerciasis/filariasis elimination programmes should be encouraged whenever possible.

## Helminth control in school-age children

Schistosomiasis and STH infections are diseases of poverty. Control of these diseases consolidates advances made by child survival programmes, helps to build the working capacity of adolescents and adults, and enhances opportunities for economic development. Adequate sustained control and, ultimately, interruption of transmission will depend on the success of intersectoral collaboration in improving hygiene and living conditions.

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