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Prospects for Schistosomiasis Elimination

Guest Editors:

Prof. Dr. Robert Bergquist
WHO/TDR (retired), Swiss TPH, 4051 Basel, Switzerland

Prof. Dr. Darren Gray
Department of Global Health, National Centre for Epidemiology & Population Health, ANU College of Health and Medicine, The Australian National University, 62 Mills Rd, Canberra, Australia

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Message from the Guest Editors

This Special Issue focuses on current efforts to limit the ravages of schistosomiasis with a view to eliminate this helminth, parasitic infection as a public health issue on a world-wide scale. Excellent progress has moved China and several countries in North Africa and the Middle East close to the elimination of schistosomiasis and this provides hope that the reign of the 'God of Plague' is near. The disease has, however, still a strong presence in sub-Saharan Africa with endemic areas stretching from Latin America to Southeast Asia putting more than 800 million people at risk, while the number of those actually infected remains as high as somewhere between 200 and 250 million people, the majority living in low- and middle income countries. Schistosomiasis is one of the neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) targeted by the World Health Organization for increased control and eventual elimination in the next 10–20 years. Morbidity control has in principle been achieved thanks to large-scale, repeated chemotherapy with praziquantel, but there are still areas with many cases of advanced disease.