

Correspondence

Mass drug administration for elimination of lymphatic filariasis: a discussion

Sir,

The recent report by Karmakar *et al* on mass drug administration for elimination of lymphatic filariasis is very interesting¹. Karmakar *et al*¹ reported that there were several problems. There are some interesting concerns from this work. The high rate of non compliance in this setting reflects the possible problem of the present elimination program. It might be expected that the exact problem of non compliance might be higher than that presented in this report since some subjects might disguise in response to the question in this study. If the problem of non compliance is rather high, the possible solution might be the adaptation of the concept for elimination for tuberculosis that the distributors have to observe the recipients ingest drug face to face.

References

1. Karmakar PR, Mitra K, Chatterjee A, Jana PK, Bhattacharya S, Lahiri SK. A study on coverage, compliance and awareness about mass drug administration for elimination of lymphatic filariasis in a district of West Bengal, India. *J Vector Borne Dis* 2011; 48: 101–4.

Somsri Wiwanitkit & Viroj Wiwanitkit
E-mail: somsriwiwan@hotmail.com

Author's reply

Dear Sir,

Thank you for showing interest in the article. For mass drug administration to be successful it should be administered to >85% of the population in endemic area and must be sustained for 5 years. In any interview, there is chance of favourable response on the part of respondent. To overcome this problem there was a check question in our questionnaire. The respondent was asked to show the tablet given by the drug distributor. Usually we got the response

that it was consumed or it was thrown away or it was kept but not consumed. We have mentioned in our article that according to guidelines issued by the Government of India drugs should be administered *under supervision* to all the people except children <2 years, pregnant woman and severely ill persons. But in practice drug consumption was unsupervised. So, what is important is to train the health workers and supervise their activities more closely by supervisors, as seen in pulse polio immunization. Again in our study we have shown that knowledge of the community about lymphatic filariasis and its elimination programme was low. So, there is a need for educating the people and supervised drug therapy present this opportunity to the health workers.

Prasanta Ray Karmakar
Associate Professor, Community Medicine
R G Kar Medical College, Kolkata
E-mail: prasantarayk@gmail.com

Commenters' response

Sir,

Thanks for your reply. As noted in your reply, "there is need for educating the people and supervised drug therapy present this opportunity to the health workers". Showing the tablet might have no mean for the actual ingestion. The respondent might ingest it or not in real practice. For sure, as noted, some cases might try to reply favorable question to the interviewers. Focusing on the "administered under supervision", it can be most effective if the subject has to eat in direct observed therapy (DOT) way with the distributor. This is the effective method that has been used in case of tuberculosis control.

Somsri Wiwanitkit & Viroj Wiwanitkit
E-mail: somsriwiwan@hotmail.com