

Local power - global change

MDP Operations Update During COVID-19



With the ongoing widespread transmission of Coronavirus, the MDP team has been working from home per the guidance provided by The Task Force for Global Health, our home institution. We support the World Health Organization's (WHO) [guidance](#) to put on hold the mass treatment campaigns to ensure the health and safety of the health workers and the endemic communities.

In the meantime, we continue working with countries to ensure that 2020 Mectizan® shipments are sent and delivered where feasible so that national programs will be ready when it is safe to resume mass drug administration activities.

We continue our communication activities to support the launch of the WHO Roadmap for Neglected Tropical Diseases.

We urge you to wash your hands, practice social distancing, wear a mask, and please be safe!

World Hand Hygiene Day



On May 5th, 2020, we celebrated World Hand Hygiene Day. This year, hand hygiene is particularly important due to COVID-19 and the collective effort to prevent its spread.

We also encourage hand washing because clean hands protect community drug distributors and health workers fighting NTDs from infections and protect the people they're helping.

To learn more about World Hand Hygiene Day, visit CDC's Hand Hygiene [site](#) or check out the conversations on Twitter with the [#HandHygiene](#) hashtag.

The Mectizan Expert Committee



Dr. Gilbert Burnham (left), Chair of the Mectizan Expert Committee

Dr. Gilbert Burnham, a professor at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health at Johns Hopkins University, serves as the Chair of the Mectizan Expert Committee (MEC).

The MEC is an independent body of nine internationally recognized experts in the fields of public health, tropical disease, ophthalmology, and social science established by [Merck & Co., Inc., Kenilworth, N.J., U.S.A.](#) to provide technical oversight of the Mectizan Donation Program (MDP). With the exception of the Chair, Mectizan Expert Committee Members are appointed for two-to-three-year terms and meet at least once annually.

The guidance and expertise of the MEC are crucial to the success of MDP. Learn more about each MEC member and their work with onchocerciasis and lymphatic filariasis at our [MEC page](#).

Call For Nominations For The Mectizan Award!



The Mectizan Award is given by Merck & Co., Inc. to recognize individual contributions to the elimination of onchocerciasis or lymphatic filariasis.

We welcome you to submit nominations based on the criteria listed on [this form](#). All nominations received by the Mectizan Donation Program will be screened to ensure that they meet the established criteria and will then be reviewed by Merck & Co., Inc. and the Mectizan Expert Committee Chair for selection of the recipient.

The deadline for all nominations is August 1st, 2020.

If you would like to submit a nomination, please visit our [award nomination page](#).

Stories from the Field



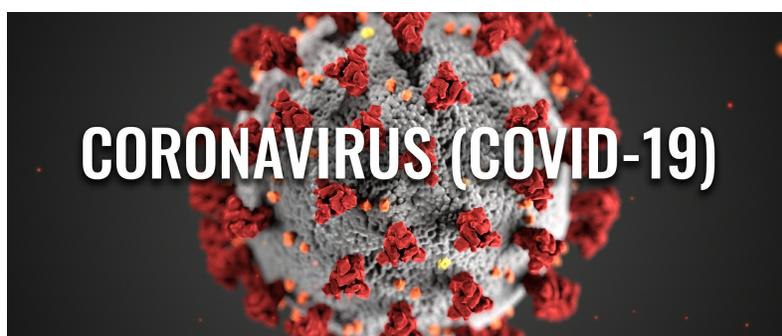
From fishermen to scientists and community elders to country directors, everyone involved in the distribution of Mectizan has their own unique story:

- A community drug distributor who travels to 15 villages ensures that his local communities get the Mectizan[®] they need to eliminate onchocerciasis and lymphatic filariasis.
- A scientist who leads a team of researchers, lab technicians, and trainees to support elimination efforts of neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) for his country.
- A community elder and treatment recipient who loves wearing sunglasses because she is proud to have good eyesight.

All of these people contribute to the goals we're all working toward - to [#StampOutOncho](#) and [#EliminateLF!](#)

Follow MDP's [Instagram account](#) for a collection of stories with accompanying photos and videos.

Mectizan Expert Committee Statement on the Potential Efficacy of Ivermectin on COVID-19



In March, a [report](#) by Caly et al. found that ivermectin showed in vitro activity against SARS-COV-2 (COVID-19) in tissue cultures. These findings are consistent with the activity of ivermectin previously reported against other viruses in vitro. However, the high concentration of ivermectin needed to produce anti-viral effects in laboratory tissue culture is far beyond dosage levels approved by the FDA for treatment of parasites in humans and known to be safe and well tolerated. Furthermore, the concentration is many times higher than dosage levels ever tested in humans. High doses in animal models have produced serious toxicity. These preliminary laboratory findings in tissue cultures are not sufficient to indicate that ivermectin will be of clinical benefit to reduce viral loads in COVID-19 patients.

Reference

1. Caly, L., et al., The FDA-approved drug ivermectin inhibits the replication of SARS-CoV-2 in vitro. Antiviral research, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.antiviral.2020.104787>



(*Merck & Co., Inc., Kenilworth, New Jersey USA, is known as MSD outside the United States and Canada)

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