

Neglected

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MULTIMEDIA

ABSTRACT: Neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) are a treatable category of infectious disease that affect the poorest of the poor. Represented by the seven reaching hands in the print, the most common of these diseases are onchocerciasis, schistosomiasis, blinding trachoma, hookworm, lymphatic filariasis, roundworm, and whipworm. Left untreated, these diseases can result in crippling effects that limit productivity and thus encourage impoverishment. NTDs have the potential to be eradicated, yet efforts to do so are largely unsupported due to little interest on the behalf of major pharmaceutical companies. Broad-spectrum medicines for NTDs can cost as little as fifty cents per person per year, a minute sum compared to the amounts spent on pharmaceutical advertising and marketing. There is a critical need for these medicines in areas of limited access, particularly in regions with reduced burdens of disease to prevent transmission and to eliminate potential proliferation. Strengthened partnerships are necessary to end the global incidence and prevalence of neglected tropical diseases and to advance the status of public health. The medicines for NTDs are available; the major challenge is whether or not we will take the initiative to administer them to the one out of every six persons in need.