

Problems in Dracunculiasis Eradication Activities in Ogou District, Togo

YAWODOTSE AFETSE

Institute of Tropical Medicine, Nagasaki University

Togo is one of the 14 remaining dracunculiasis-endemic countries of the world. In 2000, 75,223 cases of dracunculiasis were reported from these 14 African countries, and Togo reported 811 indigenous cases from 147 villages, the six largest numbers after Sudan, Nigeria, Ghana, Burkina Faso, and Niger. About a half of the cases (386) were reported from Ogou district. In the present study we obtained monthly reports on dracunculiasis eradication activities in Ogou district for 22 months in 2002 and 2003. During this period, 51867 households were visited, and 380 dracunculiasis cases were found, of which 327 (86%) were contained cases. Contained cases mean 1) the infected person was detected within 24 hours of the emergence of guinea worm through the skin, 2) actions (i.e. occlusive bandages, counselling, and care of the patient until the worm is pulled out) were taken to prevent the person from contaminating sources of drinking water, and 3) these two conditions were confirmed by a supervisor within 7 days of occurrence. The eradication programme distributed more than 30,000 clothes for filtering drinking water. Although the number of dracunculiasis cases is decreasing, integration of this vertical eradication programme with the primary health care system of communities is necessary for successful eradication of the disease.