

Onchocerciasis in the Americas: from arrival to (near) elimination

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Abstract

Onchocerciasis (river blindness) is a debilitating disease caused by the parasitic nematode *Onchocerca volvulus*. It is a major cause of blindness and disability in sub-Saharan Africa, where approximately 120 million people are at risk. In the Americas, onchocerciasis was introduced by the slave trade in the 16th century. The disease was first reported in the Americas in 1565 in the Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico. Since its arrival, onchocerciasis has spread throughout the Americas, reaching its highest prevalence in the Amazon basin. The disease is now being eliminated in several countries, including Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela. This review discusses the history of onchocerciasis in the Americas, its epidemiology, and the progress of elimination efforts.

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Operational Efficiencies

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