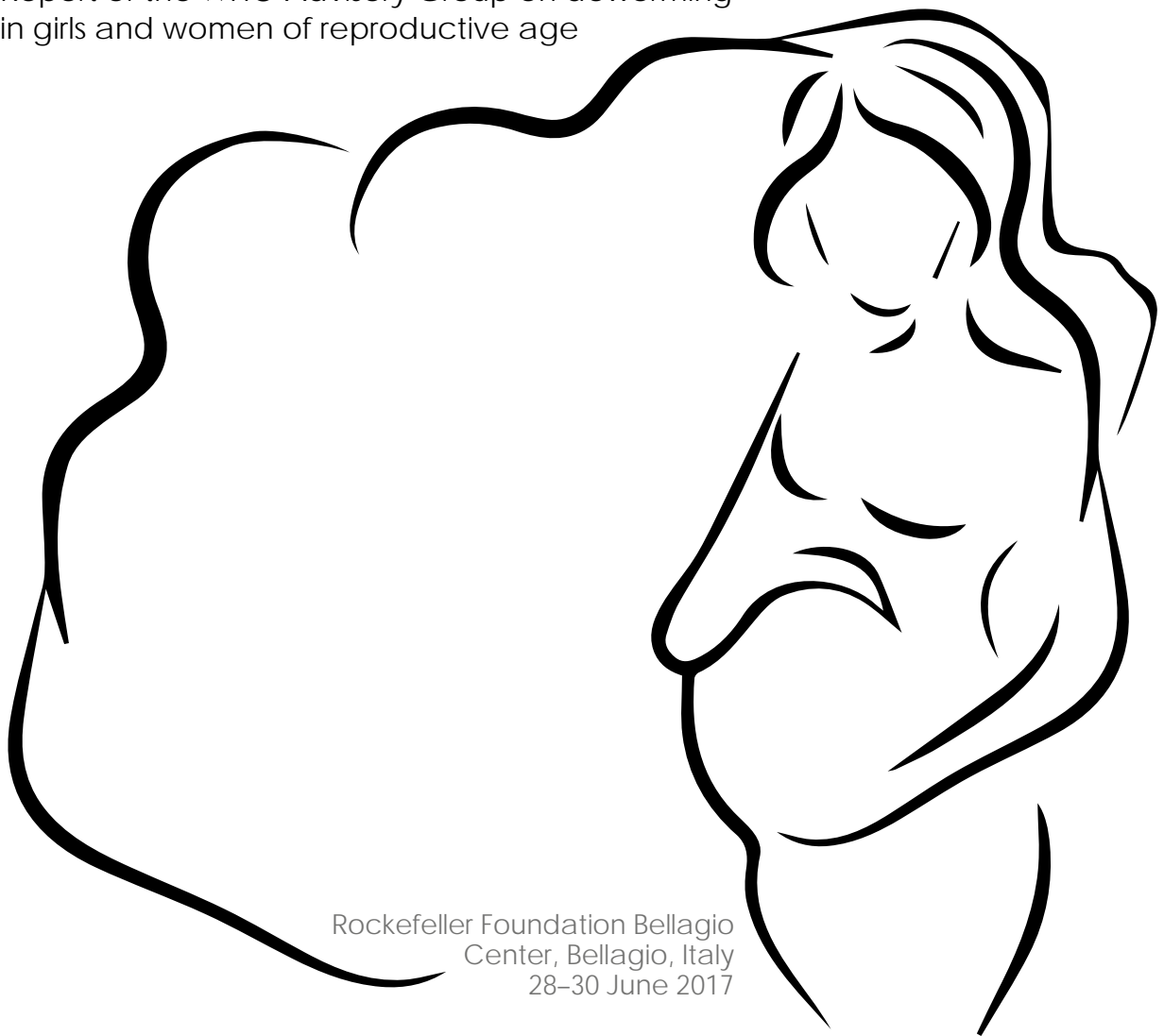


Reaching girls and women of reproductive age with deworming

Report of the WHO Advisory Group on deworming
in girls and women of reproductive age



Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio
Center, Bellagio, Italy
28–30 June 2017



**World Health
Organization**

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THE BELLAGIO DECLARATION

Every girl and every woman of reproductive age who is infected with soil-transmitted helminths has the right to be treated.

Because ... intestinal worm infections of moderate and heavy intensity, especially hookworm and whipworm infections, cause substantial morbidity in girls and women of reproductive age.

Because ... treatment is safe and effective at reducing morbidity, including during pregnancy (after the first trimester) and during breastfeeding.

Because ... girls and women of reproductive age living in areas endemic for soil-transmitted helminth infections who present to a health service should be treated on a case-by-case basis.

For logistic and cost-effective reasons, where the prevalence of soil-transmitted helminth infection in a community equals or exceeds 20%, targeted preventive chemotherapy of all girls and women of reproductive age in the community is recommended. Preventive chemotherapy targeted to this group at risk can be delivered through many different venues including schools, households, health facilities such as antenatal care clinics, and other appropriate venues.

Background

The **World Health Organization** (WHO) periodically convenes meetings and consultations in order to provide updated guidance to Member States on public health matters of particular global importance. In December 1994, WHO convened an informal consultation to address the increasingly urgent issue of hookworm infection and associated morbidity in women of reproductive age, a population that had been neglected for far too long. The report of this informal consultation, published by WHO in 1996, listed nine key research gaps, importantly expanding the research focus to include other parasite infections, in addition to hookworm infections, which impact the health and nutrition of girls and women of reproductive age (WHO, 1996). It also drew attention to the lack of specific empirical evidence on pregnant and lactating women. Since the preparation of this seminal report, WHO has published numerous documents and guidelines on parasite infections, on anaemia and on deworming that have included girls and women of reproductive age but, until now, none has specifically focused on this population. This 2017 meeting was convened in response, to remind the international community of the continuing importance of soil-transmitted helminth infections in girls and women of reproductive age and of the need to ensure their inclusion in all efforts aimed at reducing the morbidity associated with and transmission of these infections.

The **Rockefeller Foundation** is renowned for its visionary role and active participation in eliminating hookworm infection and disease from the United States in the early 1900s. This singular achievement is widely recognized as having established the public health system in the United States and for creating a global civic citizenry to address issues of global importance. Since the 1900s the Rockefeller Foundation has supported innovative and impactful ideas that have the potential to transform people's lives for the better. One of its foremost concerns focuses on the theme of resilience. The notion of resilience captures the capacity of girls and women of reproductive age to overcome the adverse effects of hookworm and other parasitic infections. By hosting experts who all have contributed in one way or another to reducing the consequences of hookworm and other soil-transmitted helminth (STH) infections in girls and women of reproductive age (at its Bellagio Center), the Rockefeller Foundation contributes to informed advocacy for public health action and research affecting those who are most vulnerable.

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