

NETWORK OF
WHO COLLABORATING CENTRES FOR
TRACHOMA



SECOND MEETING REPORT
DECATUR, GA, USA, 26 JUNE 2016



**World Health
Organization**

Network of WHO collaborating centres for trachoma

Report of 2nd meeting

Decatur, GA, USA, 26 June 2016



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Abbreviations

BMGF	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
CDC	United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CRT	community randomized trial
CT	<i>Chlamydia trachomatis</i>
DFID	United Kingdom Department for International Development
EDCTP	European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership
GET2020	WHO Alliance for the Global Elimination of Trachoma by 2020
GTMP	Global Trachoma Mapping Project
HKI	Helen Keller International
LSHTM	London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine
KCCO	Kilimanjaro Centre for Community Ophthalmology
MDA	mass drug administration
MMDP	morbidity management and disability prevention
NIH	United States National Institutes of Health
NTD-SC	Neglected Tropical Diseases Support Center
SAFE	surgery, antibiotics, facial cleanliness, environmental improvement
TF	trachomatous inflammation—follicular
TI	trachomatous inflammation—intense
TT	trachomatous trichiasis
UCSF	University of California, San Francisco
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organization
WHOCC	WHO collaborating centre

Background

International commitment to eliminate trachoma as a public health problem worldwide is supported by resolution WHA51.11 of the World Health Assembly.¹ Important progress towards this goal has been made by harnessing the mostly informal relationships that exist between partners including Member States, the World Health Organization (WHO), academic institutions, donors and nongovernmental organizations. Recognizing that work remains to be done and that the 2020 target² for elimination is rapidly approaching, in February 2015 the WHO Department of Control of Neglected Tropical Diseases convened a group of academic institutions that had for many years helped WHO to implement its mandate on trachoma and to work towards establishing a Network of WHO collaborating centres (WHOCCs) for Trachoma. The report of that meeting has been published.³

WHO recognizes that formalized collaboration with institutions through designation of WHO collaborating centres yields benefits for both parties: WHO gains access to leading institutions worldwide and additional capacity to support its work; and institutions designated as WHOCCs gain increased visibility and recognition by national authorities and attract greater attention from the public for the health issues on which they are active. Centres can also work together at international level via a formal WHO-led platform, facilitating better coordination and enhanced opportunities to mobilize resources from funding partners. This win–win relationship between WHO and its Collaborating Centres should make a difference to the prospects of eliminating trachoma globally.

To be considered for designation as a WHOCC, eligible institutions must fulfil all of the following criteria:

- high scientific and technical standing at national and international levels;
- prominence in the country's health, scientific or educational structures;
- high quality of scientific and technical leadership, and sufficient number of staff with high-level qualifications;
- stability of personnel, activity and funding;
- strong working relationship with other institutions in the country, and at intercountry, regional and global levels;
- clear ability, capacity and readiness to contribute, both individually and within networks, to WHO programme activities, whether in support of country programmes or through participation in international cooperative activities;
- demonstrated technical and geographical relevance of both the institution and its activities to WHO's programme priorities; and
- at least 2 years of previous collaboration with WHO in carrying out jointly planned activities.

Each institution working towards designation as a WHO collaborating centre for trachoma¹ fulfils all of these criteria.

¹ Resolution WHA51.11. Global elimination of blinding trachoma. Fifty-first World Health Assembly, Geneva, 7–16 May 1998. In: Resolutions and decisions, annexes. Geneva: World Health Organization; 1998 (<http://www.who.int/blindness/causes/WHA51.11/en/>)

² Accelerating work to overcome the global impact of neglected tropical diseases: a roadmap for implementation [Roadmap approved by the Strategic and Technical Advisory Group for Neglected Tropical Diseases in 2011]. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2012 (WHO/HTM/NTD/2012.1, http://www.who.int/neglected_diseases/NTD_RoadMap_2012_Fullversion.pdf).

³ Network of WHO Collaborating Centres for Trachoma: inception meeting report. Decatur, GA, USA, 19–20 February 2015. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2015 (WHO/HTM/NTD/2016.3, http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/208889/1/9789241508964_eng.pdf?ua=1).

The second meeting of the Network was held on 26 June 2016 at the International Trachoma Initiative in Decatur, GA, USA. The objectives of the meeting were to update members of the Network and other interested parties on developments since the inception meeting (Decatur, February 2015), to review progress on activities identified at that first meeting and to plan future work.

Opening of the meeting

The meeting was opened by Dr Anthony Solomon, WHO Medical Officer for Trachoma and Secretary to the WHO Alliance for the Global Elimination of Trachoma by 2020 (GET2020), who thanked participants for devoting time to attend the meeting. Participants (Annex 1) introduced themselves, and the purpose, outcome and outputs of the meeting were agreed as follows:

Purpose: to accelerate the process of establishing a Network of WHOCCs for Trachoma, facilitate a common understanding of progress towards that goal, and allow proposed institutions to update plans for activities that the Network might undertake.

Outcome: a developing Network, composed of a number of institutions working towards designation as WHOCCs for Trachoma; plus the Secretariat at WHO headquarters, supported by the relevant regional offices.

Outputs: a meeting report.

The **Agenda** (Annex 2) was adopted without amendment.

Update on progress

Dr Solomon summarized progress towards designation of WHOCCs for Trachoma, which had been slower than anticipated due to a shortfall in human resources dedicated to trachoma elimination at WHO headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. The WHO Department of Control of Neglected Tropical Diseases was actively exploring options to redress this situation, and had agreed terms with Dr Andreas Mueller of the University of Melbourne (formerly Technical Lead, Blindness Prevention and Control, WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific) to undertake a consultancy to support trachoma elimination activities for 2 days per week. Aside from the issue of formal designation of WHOCCs for Trachoma, the

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