

Manual for case management of cutaneous leishmaniasis in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region



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Foreword

Cutaneous leishmaniasis is a complex entity representing a major public health problem in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region. Several epidemiological, parasitological and clinical aspects pose a challenge for the management and control of the disease. The *Manual for case management of cutaneous leishmaniasis in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region* addresses a crucial and sensitive aspect of the control of the disease: the treatment of patients. At the global and regional level, resolutions were endorsed in 2007 on the control of leishmaniasis by the World Health Assembly (WHA60.13) and on neglected tropical diseases by the WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean (EM/RC54/R.3). These resolutions called for necessary guidelines on prevention and management to support Member States in establishing systems for surveillance, data collection and analysis, as well as strengthening active detection and treatment of cases.

This publication represents a key step forward in translating *Control of the leishmaniasis* (WHO Technical Report Series, No. 949) into a more practical tool for health personnel directly involved in the case management of cutaneous leishmaniasis. With this manual, countries will have, for the first time, standardized diagnosis and treatment protocols, case definitions and indicators to enable them to easily track progress on cutaneous leishmaniasis case management across the Region. It will provide support to professionals in charge of cutaneous leishmaniasis, in order to alleviate the suffering of affected populations from this appalling disfiguring and stigmatizing neglected tropical disease.

Ala Alwan
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The manual was developed within the framework of the partnership signed between WHO and Sanofi-Aventis to fight some of the most neglected tropical diseases, including cutaneous leishmaniasis.¹

¹ http://www.who.int/neglected_diseases/WHO_sanofi_partnership_2011/en/

Introduction

Cutaneous leishmaniasis: an important health problem

Cutaneous leishmaniasis is a potentially severe and disfiguring disease. People with cutaneous leishmaniasis have one or several long-lasting lesions on the skin, usually without fever or general symptoms. The impact that cutaneous leishmaniasis has on propagating poverty is important, since treatment is expensive and is therefore either unaffordable or involves a great loss of wages. The cost of treatment and implementation of prevention strategies needs sizeable financial and human resource investment.

Cutaneous leishmaniasis is a major public health problem in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region. New cases are emerging in areas previously free of the disease. Over 100 000 new cases of cutaneous leishmaniasis are reported annually to WHO by countries in the Region, but the actual incidence is estimated to be three to five times higher since many patients never seek medical attention and not all patients with a diagnosis of cutaneous leishmaniasis are reported to health authorities.

Purpose of this document

The scientific and medical communities have learnt a lot about cutaneous leishmaniasis during the 20th and early 21st centuries. However, the management and control of the disease remains a difficult task. This manual provides essential information on the parasite, on the way it is transmitted and spreads, on how to make the diagnosis and how to treat patients. Annex 1 provides case definitions, Annexes 2–5 provide standard operating procedures for parasitological diagnosis and different treatments, Annex 6 provides a patient's file form to register all the necessary epidemiological,

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