

Parasitic diseases in water resources development

The need for intersectoral negotiation

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Preface

One of the cornerstones of WHO's Global Strategy for Health for All by the Year 2000 is intersectoral collaboration, and various resolutions of the World Health Assembly have encouraged WHO and its Member States to promote such collaboration in order to address the health aspects of development policies.

The increased awareness of the environment, together with the feasibility of controlling parasitic diseases, provides a good opportunity to focus attention on the health impact of development. Several such diseases can be exacerbated by water development projects unless appropriate measures for prevention and control are incorporated from the beginning. The health sector therefore needs to be involved at every stage of such projects in order to ensure that socioeconomic development does not bring about a deterioration in health status.

This book reviews the documented health impact of various water resources development projects and discusses the actions that could have mitigated the adverse effects. The message derived from the analysis is that sound proposals to control parasitic diseases could and should have been included in the development dialogue. For this to occur, the health sector needs to take a much more active role in ensuring that other sectors are aware of the potential health impact of development projects.

The analysis given here is of necessity incomplete and with a bias related to the ease of availability of data. The documentation of negative effects is not intended to be a deterrent to development. Rather it is hoped that it will encourage more complete and systematic monitoring of the health effects of water resources development, and provide a guide to the risks to be considered and the input needed from the health sector.

Readers are invited to send any information, comments or suggestions related to this publication to Chief, Schistosomiasis and other Trematode Infections, Division of Control of Tropical Diseases, World Health Organization, 1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland.

