

Comments from Dan Colley

Dear Alan,

In my mind Elie has missed the point of SCI's strength. Precisely because SCI can raise unrestricted funds and have them available to it (as opposed to say USAID or DFID determining from a geopolitical perspective who gets dewormed and who doesn't) it has the ability and insight to be the sharp end of the stick for getting deworming a place at the table in country X, Y and Z. This is especially true for schistosomiasis but also overall for deworming. The point I think he misses completely is that without someone (SCI) moving ahead in countries not served by DFID and USAID, the beachhead would not be established and people in those countries not countenanced by the big boys would continue to live their wormy lives. Basically that's where I think the rub lies. He misses the point that SCI has shown itself to be particularly adept at getting deworming into new places and he does not seem to understand how challenging that is for things like schistosomiasis where people have come to just accept it as "normal" and live with it, when their lives would be much better without that drain on their well being.

I am afraid Elie does not understand the major commitment and effort it takes to convince a government to make this a priority out of so many things that need tending to. That is of course the challenge for all of us when discussing such a relatively silent problem. It is no less a problem for being silent, but it makes advocacy all the more an essential part of starting up any new program.

As you have indicated, the choice is of course his. I cannot reasonably get into the relative merits of one thing over another without spending the effort to do so, but I do think it is unfortunate that several of the points that Elie makes for his decision are based on what seem to me to be misunderstandings of what it takes to be the spearhead in new countries. It takes the know-how and determination to work with and through substantial barriers and it takes flexible funding to be able to make the decisions to go somewhere that needs it but is not being tended and make it work.

Best regards,

Dan

Daniel G. Colley, Ph.D.
Director, Center for Tropical and Emerging Global Diseases
Director, Schistosomiasis Consortium for Operational Research and Evaluation
Professor of Microbiology
The University of Georgia