Consortium to test kala-azar treatments in East Africa

The research and development project, AfriCoLeish, will run for three years and aims to test new treatments for kala-azar (visceral leishmaniasis, or VL) and co-infection of the disease with HIV in Ethiopia and Sudan.

The AfricoLeish project, Care Package for Treatment and Control of Visceral Leishmaniasis in East Africa, aims to develop and deliver a shorter combination treatment for kala-azar patients that is as safe and effective as the current WHO-recommended first-line treatment of sodium stibogluconate and paromomycin (SSG&PM). The project also aims to determine appropriate treatment strategies for kala-azar patients who are also HIV positive, in order to treat and prevent repetitive relapses that are common in co-infected patients.

Kala-azar is fatal if left untreated. An estimated 300,000 cases occur per year in 70 endemic countries. Estimates suggest there are 30,000 new cases per year in Africa, with numbers rising sharply during an epidemic. Existing monotherapies are toxic, costly, and difficult to administer, and the treatment duration is long, requiring extended hospital stays. Efficacious and cost-effective treatments as well as prevention of relapse play a critical role in the reduction of disease reservoirs, and form a vital part of disease control. In addition, co-infection of kala-azar and HIV is a growing problem and renders treatment more difficult for both diseases.

AfriCoLeish brings together six organizations from Europe and East Africa with vast experience in R&D and treatment of HIV and kala-azar, namely the Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi); the Institute of Tropical Medicine (ITM) in Antwerp; the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine; Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF, The Netherlands); the Institute of Endemic Diseases, University of Khartoum (IEND), Sudan; and the University of Gondar (UoG), Ethiopia.


New guide to improve procurement performance

The USAID Deliver Project has published three new documents that can help supply chain programme managers understand and track key performance indicators for the procurement process. The Procurement Performance Indicators Guide Using Procurement Performance Indicators to Strengthen the Procurement Process for Public Health Commodities describes suggested key indicators that can be helpful in tracking various aspects of a procurement system.

The guide is intended for procurement managers at ministries of health and central medical stores who are responsible for procuring public health commodities. It is complemented by the Procurement Performance Indicators Dashboard, a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet that captures performance data and graphically summarizes results for each indicator in a dashboard format.