



REPORT

Innovative funding sources to stimulate research and development relevant to diseases that disproportionately affect developing countries

The Government of the Principality of Monaco devotes part of its official development assistance to the control of certain neglected diseases that affect many people in the developing countries, in particular schistosomiasis and sickle-cell anaemia in Africa

The main activities receiving support are:

1 - Helping to develop a vaccine for schistosomiasis

This project is being carried out by the Nord Pas de Calais Region INSERM in collaboration with a Franco-Senegalese medical association, *Espoir pour la santé*, and the Senegalese Ministry of Health.

The project's final objective is the development of a vaccine targeting one of the parasites responsible for the disease (*schistosoma hematobium*), which affects some 200 million people throughout the world. The financial support will concern the phase III clinical trial during which the product is to be tested under almost normal conditions of use on a large population. Interaction with other products is also being tested. The region concerned by the trial is located to the north-east of St Louis.

The Principality of Monaco has awarded funding of €425 000, amounting to approximately 4.17% of the project's total cost, for the five-year period 2008 to 2012.

2 - Support for control of sickle-cell anaemia

Sickle-cell anaemia is a genetic disease involving a malformation of red blood cells that limits their capacity to fix oxygen and causes intense crises and pain. In the absence of treatment, the life expectancy of those affected is less than 20 years. Although the disease is the world's foremost genetic disorder, with more than 500 million carriers, it is still little known because it essentially affects the African continent. Early detection and medical treatment make it possible considerably to lessen patients' suffering and to extend their life expectancy.

Without treatment, one child out of two will die before the age of 5 years, whereas the life expectancy of a patient who receives treatment is more or less the same as that of the rest of the population.

Despite being the world's foremost genetic disorder, the disease is unfamiliar to the general public in the developed countries and there is scant medical research into it. The fact is that the disease mainly affects the developing countries.

Sickle-cell anaemia is the perfect example of a neglected disease, which is stigmatized by inequality in society and in respect of health. In resolution WHA59.20 dated 27 May 2006, WHO recognized it as a public health priority. Since then, Monaco's cooperation agency has endeavoured to make it a priority for cooperation in the sphere of health.

In three of the countries to which it has assigned priority for its action (Mali, Niger and Madagascar), and in collaboration with the Ministries of Health and associations of patients, Monaco is supporting the implementation of disease-control strategies and funding the building of referral centres (providing case detection, prevention, treatment, training, applied research and the transfer of skills).

The total value of these three multi-year projects over the period 2008 to 2012 amounts to more than one million euros.

In the past three years, Monaco's deep commitment has made it possible to publicize and promote measures to control this disease at a time when very few international donors have given it their attention, thus enhancing the Principality's lead role in this effort.