The Lion’s Gaze: African River Blindness from Tropical Curiosity to International Development

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Sir Patrick Manson, 1910
Scotsman
Father of Tropical Medicine

Source: Wellcome Library, London;
reference no.: CMAC WTI/RST/F8/10
Parasitology’s Paradox: How do worms cause disease?

Robert Koch’s proof of the germ theory (1882):
1. The parasite occurs in every case of the disease

2. The parasite does not occur in other diseases or nonpathogenically

3. After being fully isolated and repeatedly grown in pure culture the parasite can induce the disease by being introduced into a healthy animal
Estimated Onchocerciasis Endemicity, 1945 and 1962

Source: Ridley 1945

Source: Waddy 1962
Estimated Onchocerciasis Endemicity, 1966

Source: WHO reprinted in Oomen, 1969
Estimated Onchocerciasis Endemicity, 2002

Source: Merck & Co., Inc., 2002
WHO Onchocerciasis Control Programs

- **OCP Countries**
- **APOC Countries**
- **Non-Endemic Countries**
Some Concluding Thoughts…

• The scale of intervention has to match the scale of transmission

• Perseverance counts; complexity and difficulty are not insurmountable

• Leadership is crucial and it need not come from the top

• Sometimes humanitarian motives are sufficient

• Fast, easy interventions are not required to make progress

• OCP: World-leading technology can thrive in the sub-Sahara

• APOC: Build capacity and mobilize existing resources

• Changing lives does not require infinite resources