

Integrated neglected tropical disease control and elimination programs: A global health 'best buy'

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A recently released report, entitled "Social and Economic Impact Review on Neglected Tropical Diseases," highlights links between neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) and socio-economic prosperity. Published by Hudson Institute's Center for Science in Public Policy, in partnership with the Global Network for Neglected Tropical Diseases, an initiative of the Sabin Vaccine Institute, the paper found NTD control and elimination efforts to be both inexpensive and highly effective, especially when paired with other major disease treatment efforts, making NTD programs one of the most cost-effective public health interventions available.

"Based on our efforts in compiling this review, we can say with confidence that NTD control and elimination is one of the best buys in global public health," said Dr. Jeremiah Norris, director of the Center for Science in Public Policy at Hudson Institute. "The crucial next step is to use this evaluation as a catalyst for prioritizing NTD programs worldwide."

NTDs are a group of parasitic and [bacterial diseases](#) that infect more than 1 billion people around the world, most of whom live below the poverty line. These diseases cause malnutrition and anemia, [pregnancy complications](#), blindness, disfigurement and delays to physical and [cognitive growth](#) among children, often perpetuating the poverty of those they infect. For a cost of approximately 50 cents per person annually, a

packet of pills can treat and protect against these diseases. Pharmaceutical companies donate most of the treatments and many programs use existing infrastructure, such as schools and community centers, to administer them.

Despite their wide-spread impact and low treatment cost, NTDs have been categorized as "other diseases" on the global health and development agenda and often exist in the shadow of better-known diseases such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. Based on their findings, the report's authors outlined key recommendations for reducing the burden of NTDs and meeting elimination targets, including prioritizing integrated programs, pivoting from an exclusive health focus to a broader socio-economic context and expanding the role of corporate and public-private partnerships.

"This new report provides strong evidence of the larger socio-economic impact that NTDs have on infected communities," said Dr. Neeraj Mistry, managing director of the Global Network for [Neglected Tropical Diseases](#). "By following the report's recommendations, we can build broader awareness and the political will necessary to put NTDs at the top of the global development agenda—improving the health and prosperity for more than a billion people currently suffering from these devastating diseases."

Provided by Sabin Vaccine Institute

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