



Blinding Trachoma in Ethiopia

The International Trachoma Initiative (ITI) is dedicated to eliminating blinding trachoma, the world's leading cause of preventable blindness.

Trachoma can be prevented and cured with inexpensive, time-limited treatment. ITI's work is grounded in the WHO-endorsed strategy called SAFE: **S**urgery for trachomatous trichiasis, **A**ntibiotics (Pfizer-donated Zithromax) to treat active infection, **F**ace-washing to reduce transmission, and **E**nvironmental improvement through access to clean water and better sanitation.

Blinding trachoma is a disease of poverty that affects 41 million people, mostly women and children, in 56 countries. Building on trachoma elimination success in Morocco, ITI currently works in 15 of the countries most affected by trachoma, including Ethiopia where it has had a country office since 2004.

TRACHOMA IN ETHIOPIA



Ethiopia Population: 76,511,887¹

Ethiopia Rank on Human Development Index: No.169 of 177 countries¹

Infection:

- Ethiopia carries the largest burden of trachoma infection—30%—in Africa.ⁱⁱ
- More than 138,000 Ethiopians have been blinded by trachoma.ⁱⁱⁱ
- 1.3 million Ethiopians (15 years and older) have trichiasis, the advanced stage of trachoma, and need immediate surgery.^{iv}
- Of children aged 1-9 years, over 9 million—40%—have an active trachoma infection;^v in some Ethiopian districts, more than 80% of children have active trachoma.^{vi}
- An estimated 529 of the 611 Ethiopian districts are trachoma-endemic.^{vii}
- 65 million Ethiopians live in endemic districts.^{viii}

ITI Activities:

- ITI supported the administration of 6,044,714 Zithromax treatments in Ethiopia in 2007.^{ix}
- ITI-supported partners performed trachomatous trichiasis (TT) surgeries on 51,624 people in Ethiopia in 2007—103% of the target of 50,000.^x
- Ethiopia's National Five-Year Strategic Plan for Trachoma Control (2006-2010), which was updated by technical input from ITI-Ethiopia, has been endorsed by the Federal Ministry of Health.^{xi}

- National Trachoma Control Goals for the end of 2010 include:
 - Cover 281 new weredas (districts) with SAFE strategy
 - Reach over 42 million people^{xii}

Opportunities:

- Ethiopia's Accelerated Expansion of Primary Health Care Coverage Strategy seeks to provide universal coverage to the rural population. New Health Posts will focus mainly on preventive aspects of health care, such as promotion of healthful living, that contribute significantly to trachoma control.^{xiii}
- The SAFE strategy has been implemented in 55 districts, covering 7.9 million people in 2007^{xiv}
- Access to the antibiotic Zithromax expanded from 394,786 treatments administered in 2003^{xv} to 6,044,714 treatments in 2007.^{xvi}

Challenges:

- Twice as many women suffer from trichiasis and ensuing blindness than men.^{xvii}
- There are only 94 ophthalmologists in Ethiopia.^{xviii}
- There is a high attrition rate among TT-surgeons, who must perform TT surgery in addition to their other health related duties.^{xix}
- To meet demand, an increase is needed of ophthalmic nurses being trained per year to deliver eye care services full-time.^{xx}
- 84% of the population share is rural, leading to conditions ripe for trachoma infection.^{xxi}
 - Access to an improved water source is only 12% rural as opposed to 81% urban.^{xxii}
 - Access to improved sanitation is only 7% rural as opposed to 33% urban.^{xxiii}
 - In Oromia—the largest, most populated region in Ethiopia—access to safe water is as low as 27% of the population.^{xxiv}

To speak to ITI's country representative in Ethiopia or for more information on trachoma control in Ethiopia, please contact Geoffrey Knox at +212-229-0540 and gknox@geoffreyknox.com or communications@trachoma.org.

*The International Trachoma Initiative (ITI) is a non-governmental organization working to prevent, treat and ultimately eliminate blinding trachoma. With programs currently in 15 countries in Africa and Asia, ITI is a major proponent and facilitator of the SAFE strategy to prevent and eliminate trachoma through **S**urgery, **A**ntibiotics, **F**acial cleanliness and **E**nvironmental improvement. ITI, created through a public-private partnership of the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation and Pfizer Inc, collaborates with international agencies, governmental, and non-governmental organizations to build targeted support—including Zithromax[®] donated by Pfizer—for expanded implementation of the SAFE strategy, operational research and program evaluation, education and advocacy. <http://www.trachoma.org>*

-
- ¹ "CIA World Factbook." United States Central Intelligence Agency. <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/et.html>> accessed 24 March 2008.
- ⁱ "Trachoma Expert Committee Fact Sheet 2008." International Trachoma Initiative.
- ⁱⁱ "Global Health Atlas." World Health Organization (2003). <<http://www.who.int/globalatlas/DataQuery/default.asp>> accessed 24 March 2008.
- ⁱⁱⁱ "Ethiopia Trachoma Data Form (2008)." World Health Organization Alliance for the Global Elimination of Blinding Trachoma, Twelfth Meeting. Geneva, Switzerland: 28-30 April 2008.
- ^{iv} "Trachoma Expert Committee Fact Sheet 2008." International Trachoma Initiative.
- ^v "Ethiopia Trachoma Data Form (2008)." World Health Organization Alliance for the Global Elimination of Blinding Trachoma, Twelfth Meeting. Geneva, Switzerland: 28-30 April 2008.
- ^{vi} "Trachoma Expert Committee Fact Sheet 2007." International Trachoma Initiative. <http://www.trachoma.org/cpropdf/Ethiopia.pdf> accessed 24 March 2008.
- ^{vii} "Ethiopia Trachoma Data Form (2008)." World Health Organization Alliance for the Global Elimination of Blinding Trachoma, Twelfth Meeting. Geneva, Switzerland: 28-30 April 2008.
- ^{viii} Ibid.
- ^{ix} "Trachoma Expert Committee Fact Sheet 2008." International Trachoma Initiative.
- ^x Ibid.
- ^{xi} Ibid.
- ^{xii} Ibid.
- ^{xiii} Kello, Amir Bedri. "2007 Annual Report--Ethiopia-Trachoma Control Program." International Trachoma Initiative (2007).
- ^{xiv} Ibid.
- ^{xv} "Trachoma Expert Committee Fact Sheet 2007." International Trachoma Initiative. <http://www.trachoma.org/cpropdf/Ethiopia.pdf> accessed 24 March 2008.
- ^{xvi} "Ethiopia Trachoma Data Form (2008)." World Health Organization Alliance for the Global Elimination of Blinding Trachoma, Twelfth Meeting. Geneva, Switzerland: 28-30 April 2008.
- ^{xvii} "National Survey on Blindness, Low Vision and Trachoma in Ethiopia." September 2006.
- ^{xviii} Ibid.
- ^{xix} Kello, Amir Bedri. "2007 Annual Report--Ethiopia-Trachoma Control Program." International Trachoma Initiative (2007).
- ^{xx} Ibid.
- ^{xxi} "Ethiopia Facts and Figures." Encarta. <http://encarta.msn.com/fact_631504763/ethiopia_facts_and_figures.html> accessed 25 March 2008.
- ^{xxii} "Earth Trends Ethiopia Country Profile." EarthTrends. <http://earthtrends.wri.org/pdf_library/country_profiles/pop_cou_231.pdf> accessed 25 March 2008.
- ^{xxiii} Ibid.
- ^{xxiv} "Trachoma in Ethiopia Fact Sheet." International Trachoma Initiative.

DISCLAIMER: All reasonable precautions have been taken to verify and ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this Fact Sheet. However, the published material is being distributed without warranty of any kind, either expressed or implied.