



Blinding Trachoma in Nepal

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 (TT), **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 Nepal, where it has supported the trachoma program since 2002.

The National Trachoma Program (NTP) in Nepal, along with its SAFE partners, has carried out detailed population-based trachoma prevalence surveys in 24 out of Nepal's 75 districts to determine the burden of the disease. By the end of 2008, the trachoma disease burden throughout the entire country will be fully assessed so that planning for Zithromax treatment and TT surgeries can be identified.

TRACHOMA IN NEPAL



*Nepal Population: 29,519,114 (July 2008 est.)*ⁱ

*Nepal Rank on Human Development Index: No.142 of 177 countries*ⁱⁱ

Infection:

- More than 32,817 Nepalese are estimated to be blinded by trachoma.ⁱⁱⁱ
- 246,764 Nepalese are estimated to have active trachoma.^{iv}
- 6 million Nepalese are at risk of trachoma infection.^v 10.6% of the population in the 24 districts surveyed has active trachoma.^{vi}
- Active trachoma prevalence rates among children aged 1-9 are as high as 32.7% in some districts.^{vii}
- Trachoma is endemic in 10 of Nepal's 75 Districts; however, national assessment of the trachoma disease burden has not been completed.^{viii}

ITI Activities:

- The SAFE Program has been implemented in 10 districts.^{ix}
- ITI supported the administration of 1,241,136 Zithromax treatments in 2007. Treatments covered three districts—Surkhet, Dang and Kapilvastu^x
- 1,477 TT surgeries have been performed nationally—74% coverage. In SAFE program districts, 822 TT surgeries were performed—75% coverage.^{xi}

Opportunities:

- Nepal's National Trachoma Program has put tremendous efforts into getting funds to implement the SAFE strategy in 10 districts and has succeeded in mobilizing national resources to implement the Surgery and Antibiotic components of SAFE in Nepal.^{xii}
- The government of Nepal is committed to eliminating blinding trachoma from the country and has approved the necessary budget for the Antibiotic component of SAFE.
- 1,534 hand pumps and water taps were installed in 2007 (96% of the targeted 1,600) and 18,530 household latrines (109% of the targeted 17,000) were constructed in SAFE program districts.
- 5,429 children aged 1-9 years old (68%) were found to have clean faces.^{xiii}

Challenges:

- 3 times as many women suffer from trichiasis and ensuing blindness than men.^{xiv}
- The national TT surgery backlog is currently 32,817.^{xv}
- There are only 119 ophthalmologists in Nepal.^{xvi}

To speak to the National Trachoma Program Director in Nepal or for more information on trachoma control in Nepal, 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 **Surgery, Antibiotics, Facial cleanliness and Environmental 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>*

ⁱ "CIA World Factbook." [United States Central Intelligence Agency](http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/np.html). <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/np.html>> accessed 28 April 2008.

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- ii "Trachoma Expert Committee Fact Sheet 2008." International Trachoma Initiative
iii Data provided by Mr. BB Thapa, Director of Nepal National Trachoma Program.
iv Ibid.
v Ibid.
vi "Trachoma Expert Committee Fact Sheet 2008." International Trachoma Initiative
vii Data provided by Mr. BB Thapa, Director of Nepal National Trachoma Program.
viii Trachoma Expert Committee Fact Sheet 2008." International Trachoma Initiative
ix Ibid.
x Ibid.
xi Ibid.
xii Ibid.
xiii Ibid.
xiv Data provided by Mr. BB Thapa, Director of Nepal National Trachoma Program.
xv Trachoma Expert Committee Fact Sheet 2008." International Trachoma Initiative
xvi Data provided by Mr. BB Thapa, Director of Nepal National Trachoma Program.

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