



Viet Nam

Trachoma in Viet Nam

Population (est. 2004): 82,689,518
 Human Development Rank: 112 out of 177

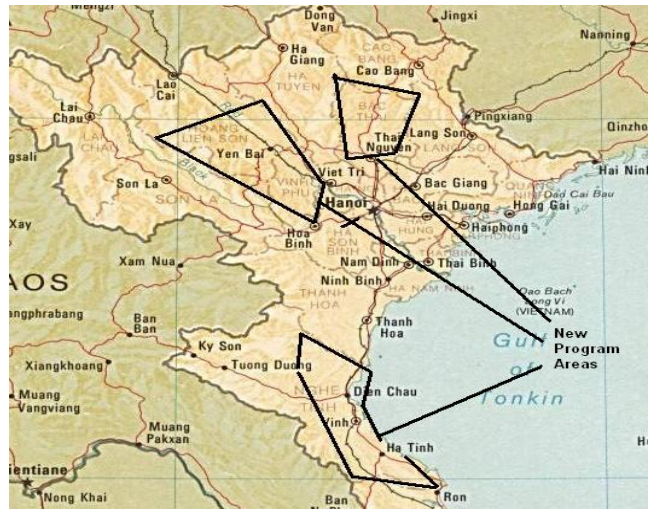
Burden of Trachoma (estimated):

Trichiasis: 300,000

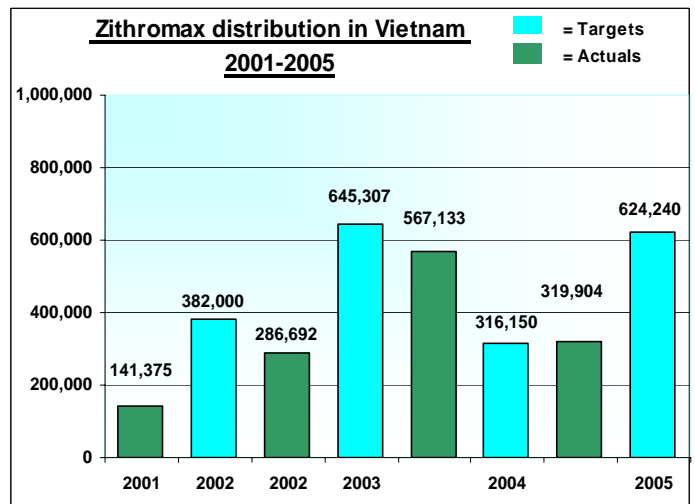
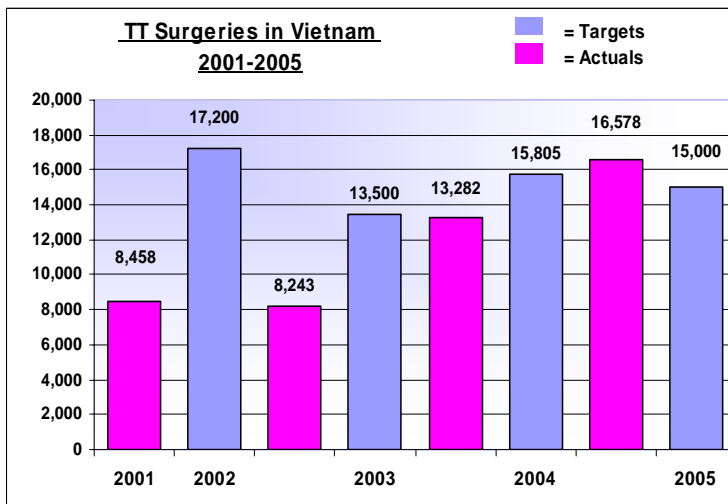
National Program for Trachoma Control:

ITI Country Representative: Dr. Mai Phuong Nguyen

For decades, trachoma control has been an important part of Vietnam's health agenda. From 1975 to 1995 through trichiasis surgery, antibiotic treatment and health and hygiene education, the national prevalence of active disease decreased from 17.5 to 7 percent and that of Trichiasis decreased from 6.4 to 1.2 percent. However, rapid assessment and population prevalence surveys conducted in 11 districts of 7 provinces indicate that there are still districts where trachoma remains a public health problem. In these districts, the range of disease prevalence was 7-33 percent, and that of Trichiasis 2-17 percent. The goal of the national trachoma programme is to focus on the Trachoma-endemic districts and eliminate blinding trachoma by 2010.



Eyelid Surgeries and Antibiotic Treatments in Viet Nam



Major Accomplishments, Developments and Challenges -- 2004

Introduction

The SAFE strategy was first implemented in a limited number of districts for 2 years. In July 2004, the ITI-assisted Strategic Planning Workshop was organized with participants from various government and international organizations, resulting in the 2005-2010 National Plan which aims at eliminating blinding Trachoma by 2010 through the SAFE strategy. A rapid assessment survey to provide data for preparing the next implementation plan was also completed in 2004; an article on this research has just been accepted for publication in the World Health Organization's Research Bulletin: "Using Lot Quality



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Assurance Sampling (LQAS) and Area Sampling to Identify Priority Intervention Areas for Trachoma Control Activities.” The Rockefeller Foundation funded a two-year health equity research study conducted by ITI in collaboration with Erasmus University that started in 2004. Data collection has been completed and results will be available in 2005. Zithromax was distributed in the research areas in order to support study objectives. In July 2005, a high level delegation comprising the ITI President, Vice President for development and external affairs, one Board member and a US media celebrity Cheryl Tiegs visited Viet Nam and met with senior government officials. On this occasion, the Vice President of Viet Nam reiterated the commitment of the country to provide all the support needed to reach the goal of eliminating blinding trachoma by 2010.

Trichiasis Surgery and Antibiotic Treatment

In 2004, 319,904 people were treated with Zithromax against a target of 316,150. In early 2005, an unplanned distribution of 5,549 doses of Zithromax took place because program management decided to do a pilot intervention in one commune to try out a modified strategy for mass treatment. Overall, the drug distribution was conducted smoothly and safely. Of the 1,911 trachoma-endemic communes (spanning 167 districts), 630 are expected to receive area-wide antibiotic drug treatment by end 2005, of which 298 would complete the 3-year cycle. Due to delays in approval by the government, 1,000 TT surgeries were not carried out during the first six months of 2005 as planned. These surgeries will be done instead during the third quarter of the year. Because some districts have shown a high rate of TT recurrence or surgical failure in past years, a study will be performed to find out the risk factors and causes for these recurrences/failures. Although overall TT surgery rates were high in 2004, marked differences were noted in the performance among provinces, districts and communes. Lessons learned from the high performing program districts and communes will be shared with the other districts and communes that performed less well.

Face Washing and Environmental Improvement

Information, communication and education activities were organized in all primary schools and communes to promote the participation of villagers/schoolchildren in trachoma screening, TT surgeries, facial washing/personal hygiene, water and environmental sanitation. Trachoma prevention messages continued to be broadcast to districts and communes. Over 15,000 water sources were provided and nearly 22,000 latrines were constructed. The Water and Sanitation Program implemented by UNICEF Hanoi with ITI funding also achieved most of the set targets. This will significantly increase the relatively important rural water supply coverage estimated at 67 percent in 2002. This will also increase the low rural sanitation coverage measured at 26 percent in 2002.

Lessons Learned/Solutions Proposed

National/Provincial staff conducted field monitoring trips to program sites with a focus on remote and problematic mountainous areas like Na Ri and Lac Son to supervise and monitor program activities and to strengthen district steering committees. Local leadership and coordinating roles will be enhanced in order to improve water and sanitation performance. Regular program management meetings were held at all levels. Challenges for 2005 include improving the quality of surgery and mobilizing more TT patients to uptake lid surgery and to receive antibiotic treatment.

Table of Partners by Component

Surgery	Antibiotics	Face washing	Environmental Improvement
Fred Hollow Foundation	Fred Hollow Foundation	Fred Hollow Foundation	Fred Hollow Foundation
MSA	MSA	MSA	Plan International
ORBIS		ORBIS	DANIDA
		Vietnam Women’s Union (VWU)	International Development Enterprise (IDE)
		UNICEF	Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Development (MARD)
		Ministry of Education & Training (MOET)	Japan International Cooperation Agency (JAICA)