



Blinding Trachoma in Tanzania

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 63 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 Tanzania where it has had a country office since 1999.

TRACHOMA IN TANZANIA



*Tanzania Population: 40,213,162*ⁱ

*Tanzania Rank on Human Development Index: No.159 of 177 countries*ⁱⁱ

Infection:

- 45,000 Tanzanians have been blinded by trachoma.ⁱⁱⁱ
- 2 million Tanzanians (15 years and older) have active trachoma^{iv}; 167,072 people (3%) have trichiasis, the advanced stage of trachoma, and need immediate surgery.^v
- Of children aged 1-9 years, over 2 million—27%—have an active trachoma infection.^{vi}
- 12.5 million people in Tanzania are at risk of trachoma infection.^{vii}
- 50 of Tanzania's 132 districts are trachoma-endemic.^{viii}

ITI Activities:

- ITI supported the administration of 4,966,847 Zithromax treatments in Tanzania in 2007.^{ix} More than 16 million people have been treated with Pfizer-donated Zithromax since the programs inception in 1999.^x
- ITI-supported partners performed 2,910 TT surgeries in 2007.^{xi} A total of 20,670 TT patients have been operated on since 1999.^{xii}
- In 2007, ITI, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW), continued to implement SAFE activities based on the Five Year National Trachoma Control Program Strategic Plan (2004-2008).^{xiii}

- Advocacy through ITI and MoHSW ensured that 12 trachoma-endemic districts were able to incorporate SAFE into their district health plans for 2007/2008.^{xiv}
- National Trachoma Control Goals for 2008 include:^{xv}
 - To reduce TT backlog by 80% by end of 2008
 - To ensure more than 80% coverage of target population by end of 2008
 - To reduce disease transmission by 40% by end of 2008

Opportunities:

- 1,100 new water sources were constructed during 2007, nearly double the annual target of 600.^{xvi}
- 54,571 latrines were constructed, constituting 68% of the 2007 target of 80,000.^{xvii}
- In 2007, ITI, MoHSW, and Helen Keller International (HKI) formed a committee for surgery that has led to joint planning and implementation of TT surgery training and fundraising efforts.

Challenges:

- Three times as many women suffer from trichiasis and ensuing blindness than men.^{xviii}
- The national TT surgery backlog is 167,072. Funds are needed for more surgery outreach camps, so that a greater number of operations can be performed.^{xix}
- The low TT surgery coverage during 2007 was due, in part, to a heavy rainy season in most parts of the country that led to flooding.^{xx}
- There are only 29 ophthalmologists in Tanzania.^{xxi}
- An estimated 47% of the population is without access to a functional water source within 1-hour travel time (or 1 kilometer). (2004 estimate)^{xxii}
- An estimated 30% of households are without a latrine, or without access to a functional latrine. (2004 estimate)^{xxiii}
- 77% of the population share is rural, leading to conditions ripe for trachoma infection.^{xxiv}
 - Access to an improved water source is only 57% rural as opposed to 90% urban.^{xxv}

To speak to ITI's country representative in Tanzania or for more information on trachoma control in Tanzania, 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>*

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- ⁱ “CIA World Factbook.” United States Central Intelligence Agency. <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tz.html>> accessed 21 April 2008.
- ⁱⁱ “Trachoma Expert Committee Fact Sheet 2008.” International Trachoma Initiative.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.
- ^{iv} Ibid.
- ^v “Tanzania Trachoma Data Form (2008).” World Health Organization Alliance for the Global Elimination of Blinding Trachoma, Twelfth Meeting. Geneva, Switzerland: 28-30 April 2008.
- ^{vi} Ibid.
- ^{vii} Ibid.
- ^{viii} Ibid.
- ^{ix} “Trachoma Expert Committee Fact Sheet 2008.” International Trachoma Initiative.
- ^x District quarterly implementation reports, National Trachoma Control Programme, Tanzania Ministry of Health and Social Welfare – National Eye Care Program, 2007.
- ^{xi} “Trachoma Expert Committee Fact Sheet 2008.” International Trachoma Initiative.
- ^{xii} District quarterly implementation reports, National Trachoma Control Programme, Tanzania Ministry of Health and Social Welfare – National Eye Care Program, 2007.
- ^{xiii} “Trachoma Expert Committee Fact Sheet 2008.” International Trachoma Initiative.
- ^{xiv} Ibid.
- ^{xv} National Trachoma Control Program Strategic Plan 2004-2008, Tanzania Ministry of Health and Social Welfare – National Eye Care Program.
- ^{xvi} “Trachoma Expert Committee Fact Sheet 2008.” International Trachoma Initiative.
- ^{xvii} Ibid.
- ^{xviii} District quarterly implementation reports, National Trachoma Control Programme, Tanzania Ministry of Health and Social Welfare – National Eye Care Program, 2007.
- ^{xix} “Trachoma Expert Committee Fact Sheet 2008.” International Trachoma Initiative.
- ^{xx} Ibid.
- ^{xxi} Tanzania Ministry of Health and Social Welfare – National Eye Care Program.
- ^{xxii} “Tanzania Trachoma Data Form (2008).” World Health Organization Alliance for the Global Elimination of Blinding Trachoma, Twelfth Meeting. Geneva, Switzerland: 28-30 April 2008.
- ^{xxiii} Ibid.
- ^{xxiv} Ibid.
- ^{xxv} “Earth Trends Ethiopia Country Profile.” EarthTrends.
<http://earthtrends.wri.org/pdf_library/country_profiles/pop_cou_231.pdf> accessed 25 March 2008.

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