6.37 Epidemiological Situation of Bilharzia

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With Emphasis on Some Research Outcomes for Control

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Bilharzia is one of the most important waterborne parasitic diseases of humans and other vertebrates in tropical and subtropical areas. The voracious infection is documented as one of 10 tropical diseases of most concern to the world Health Organization. In Sudan, owing to the extensive construction of irrigation schemes and agricultural development projects the infection parameters of Bilharzia were exponentially increased in all States of the country. The epidemiological situation was further aggravated by the intensive population movement from endemic areas, coupled with the poor knowledge, attitude and practice of the affected inhabitants as well as the absence of serious control program. Sound microepidemiological surveys of schistosomiasis provide the necessary setting for development and realization of the significant control strategies and tactics. Variation in transmission patterns in different endemic areas makes it almost impossible to set-up a standard control strategy. Furthermore, many extensive previous reports stressed that no single control method is enough to combat the disease effectively, thus the World Health Organization adopted the combination of different measures i.e. integrated control. Such approach includes mass chemotherapy for morbidity control, whereas snail-host control reduces transmission of the disease to man. The indirect measures like the health education, provision of adequate safe-water supply and sanitation decrease both morbidity and transmission of the disease. In fact, the approach of environment-oriented tools for combating the disease was high advocated, thus, mission-oriented research was encouraged e.g. molluscicides of plants origin, bicontrol agents and others.