
Written by Dr E M Samba who, from 1980 to 1995, was director of the programme now well known as the OCP, this book provides an excellent summary of progress in a great field campaign which, over the past 20 years and in 11 west African countries, has protected 30 million people from river blindness and has freed some 250 000 km² of fertile land for resettlement and agriculture.

Part 1 covers programme operations, including the public health and socioeconomic impact of onchocerciasis and the logic and effects of controlling transmission by means of prolonged and widespread larviciding against the vector, Simulium damnosum, supplemented recently by mass treatment with ivermectin. It describes the genesis of the programme, its structure, functional organisation, and operations; its planning, implementing, reporting, and evaluation systems; and lists its impressive achievements in the fields of health, socioeconomic development, training, and research.

Part 2 deals with the management structure and with plans for the devolution, over the next 5 years, of responsibility for surveillance and the prevention of recrudescence onto the health services of the participating countries. Annex B includes a list of donors to the programme, and a summary of the 1994 budget (US $28 336 million).

The account of the OCP is clearer from 1980 onwards, when the author became a witness to events, than in the earlier years.

Sadly, the two main visionary instigators of the 1968 Tunis meeting, which decided on the feasibility of the OCP, namely Dr N Ansari of the WHO Parasitic Diseases Programme and Dr E M Samba of the OCGGE, are not mentioned. Nor, in the siting of the programme, does the book make clear the importance of the finding that the Onchocerca-Simulium complexes in the sub-Saharan savanna regions are different from those in the more southerly forest regions. This discovery permitted the OCP to be confined to the savanna zones where aerial spraying of larvicides was alone possible. The choice of the Volta river basin as the savanna site depended on two issues: firstly, that much epidemiological and entomological data from that area were already available from the OCGGE; and, secondly, that in all the countries further east in the savanna belt there was insufficient political stability to permit the establishment of an international cross border operation.

This book is a timely reminder of the public health and socioeconomic value of onchocerciasis control and may help to promote the World Bank’s newly established African Programme for Onchocerciasis Control, which aims to cover all the other countries in Africa that are afflicted by this disease.

BRIAN DUKE

Glaucoma Group

DAVID COLE TRAVEL FELLOWSHIP

The David Cole Travel Fellowship, instituted by Merck Sharp & Dohme in memory of Professor David Cole, will assist a visit to a hospital or research centre during the academic year starting 1 October 1995. The award will be equivalent to £2000. The purpose of the award is to enable the successful applicant to gain experience and knowledge in pursuit of a specific project related to glaucoma.

Wellcome General Overseas Travelling Research Fellowships 1994–95

The purpose of these fellowships is to allow postdoctoral scientists and medical graduates to gain further research experience by working in leading laboratories in the UK or the Republic of Ireland. Applications are invited from such workers who wish to undertake a research project in any branch of the natural or clinical sciences, which has a bearing on human or veterinary medicine, with the exception of cancer.

Applications may be from any country outside Europe, with the exception of New Zealand and the USA for whom special schemes are available. Awards will be made on the basis of the research proposal. The research proposed should be relevant to the research interest of the candidate in his/her own country. Awards are made for one year in the first instance, although requests for an extension may be considered. Fellowships provide a stipend within the range of £13 941 to £27 869 per annum, depending on age and experience. They also include the cost of research, attendance at scientific meetings, and return travel.

Candidates must be nominated by a sponsor in the UK or the Republic of Ireland, through whom all initial inquiries should be made. A preliminary proposal should include a one or two page outline of the research proposed, the curriculum vitae of the candidate, and a letter indicating that he/she has a position to return to at the end of the fellowship. There are no special deadlines for this scheme and applications may be submitted at any time during the year.

Requests for application forms should be addressed to: Dr J M Wilkinson, The Wellcome Trust, 183 Euston Road, London NW1 2BE. Tel: 0171-611 8407.

Candidates from New Zealand and the USA should contact the Health Research Council of New Zealand, Auckland, NZ or the Burroughs Wellcome Fund, Morrisville, NC 27560, USA, respectively, for details of appropriate schemes.

European Strabismological Association

The 22nd meeting of the European Strabismological Association (ESA) will be held in St John’s College, Cambridge, UK on 6–8 September 1995. Application papers, including abstract forms, can be obtained from: Mr J S Elston, MD, FRCS, Oxford Eye Hospital, Radcliffe Infirmary, Woodstock Road, Oxford OX2 6HE, UK.

X Tübingen Detachment Course: Retinal and Vitreous Surgery

The X Tübingen Detachment Course on retinal and vitreous surgery will be held on 16–17 September 1995 at Jekaterinburg, Russia.

Further details: Professor Kristo P Takhchi, IRTC ‘Eye Microsurgery’, Eka- terinburg, Center, Bardin Strasse, 4a, 620149 Ekatertinburg, Russia. (Tel: 007 3432 286292; Fax: 007 3432 283370.) Or Office Professor Kreissig, MD, Univ Augenklinik, Schlecht- strasse 12, 72076 Tübingen, Germany. (Tel: 07071 294758; Fax: 07071 293746.)

Care of the Elderly

A conference entitled ‘Eye disease in the elderly: assessment, treatment and rehabilitation’ will be held on 22 September 1995 at the Forte Crest Hotel, Birmingham, UK.

Further details: Deborah Gardner, Conference Office, 4 Little Essex Street, London WC2R 3LF. (Tel: 0171-836 6633; Fax: 0171-379 4202.)

British and Eire Association of Vitreo-Retinal Surgeons

The next meeting of the British and Eire Association of Vitreo-Retinal Surgeons (BEAVRS) will be held at Cameron House, Loch Lomond, Glasgow on 5–6 October 1995. Members will be contacted with further details in due course; any other doctors wishing to attend should contact Dr H M Hammer or Dr T Barrie, Glasgow Eye Infirmary, 3 Sandyford Place, Glasgow G3 7NB. (Tel: 0141-211 6767; Fax: 0141-211 6770.)

European Programme of Continuing Education

A symposium on angiography and laser will take place at the University of Créteil on 6–7 October 1995. Further details: Professor Gabriel Coscas, Clinique Ophthalmologique Universitaire- Hôpital de Créteil, 40 Avenue de Verdun, 94010 Créteil Cedex, France. (Tel: 45 17 52 24; Fax: 45 17 52 27.)

First Congress of Surgery of Bosnia and Herzegovina

The first congress of surgery of Bosnia and Herzegovina with international participation will be held at the Congress Hall of the Holiday Inn hotel, Sarajevo from 8 to 11
BOOK REVIEW

Brian Duke

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