

INVESTMENT IN RESEARCH SAVES LIVES AND MONEY

Neglected Tropical Diseases

Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) are a group of infectious diseases that can be **debilitating, disfiguring, and potentially deadly**. These threats have historically received limited attention and research funding relative to their profoundly negative impact, particularly for populations **living in poverty**.^{1,2} While NTDs are more common in tropical and subtropical areas, **many also occur in the U.S.**³

In addition to the [17 diseases](#) classified as NTDs by the World Health Organization,⁴ there is another set of overlapping diseases prevalent in the U.S. called ‘**neglected infections of poverty**.’¹ Other tropical infections such as Zika have also emerged in recent years.³ While Zika is not officially categorized as an NTD, the recent epidemic that occurred in the Americas is a reminder that **infectious diseases do not respect national boundaries**, and diseases that are unfamiliar to Americans today could be making headline news tomorrow.

COST
\$11 billion:

Global annual cost of lost productivity that can be averted if the WHO’s 2020 goals for control/elimination of NTDs are reached.⁶

TODAY

Globally, more than

1 billion

people are infected with one or more NTDs.²

In 2015, NTDs were responsible for

206,155

deaths worldwide.⁵

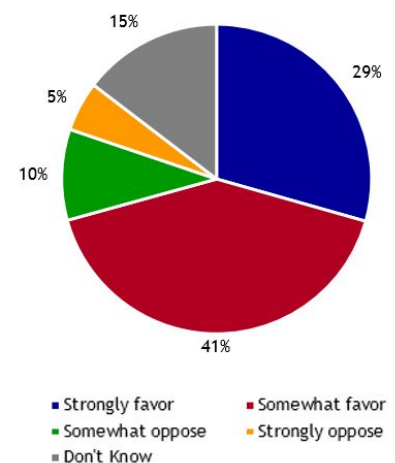
In the United States,

3-4 million

people living in the Gulf States are affected by at least one NTD or neglected infection of poverty.³

Majority Favor Doubling Funding for Medical Research over the Next Five Years

Do you favor or oppose doubling federal spending on medical research over the next five years?



Research Delivers Solutions

Medications exist for many NTDs and there are growing efforts to develop new therapies that are more effective and/or have fewer negative side effects.⁷ Research has furthered the development of medications that are not only used to treat NTDs, but also to disrupt disease spread. Currently, seven NTDs, including soil-transmitted helminths (parasitic worms) and onchocerciasis (river blindness) can be targeted by ‘**mass drug administration**’— treating an entire at-risk population to prevent people from getting sick and stalling the spread of the disease.^{7,8} Mass drug administration has **significantly reduced the burden of disease** since the early 2000s, decreasing the lost years of healthy life due to NTDs by up to 46%.⁸

Vaccines are available for just two of the 17 WHO-recognized NTDs — dengue and rabies. However, new vaccines for many of these diseases are in pre-clinical and clinical development.⁹ Researchers are also advancing vaccines for **emerging tropical diseases** such as Zika.¹⁰

In 1999 there were 7 clinical trials for NTDs listed in the WHO International Clinical Trials Registry Platform. In 2018 this number was 113.¹¹

According to the WHO Global Observatory on Health R&D, as of September 2018, there were **88 products** in development for neglected tropical diseases, including **31 diagnostics, 24 medicines, 23 vaccines, and 10 vector control products**.¹²

Source: A Research!America poll of U.S. adults conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics in January 2019

