

WHO releases strategy to control snakebite envenoming

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The World Health Organisation (WHO) has released full details of its strategy to prevent and control snakebite envenoming, a neglected tropical disease that affects 1.8–2.7 million people each year, claiming 81 000–138 000 lives and causing 400 000 cases of permanent disability.

The aim is to halve the numbers of deaths and cases of disability due to snakebite envenoming over the next 12 years through a programme that targets affected communities and their health systems, and by ensuring access to safe, effective treatment through increased cooperation, collaboration and partnership at all levels.

The strategy was developed by a 28-member panel of global experts in consultation with WHO regional offices, the scientific and research community, health foundations, advocacy groups and stakeholders. Given the importance of prevention, improved community education and empowerment and effective first response, the strategy commits to engaging communities to achieve these goals.