



directing council

PAN AMERICAN
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION
XIII Meeting

regional committee

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION
XIII Meeting



Washington, D.C.
October 1961

CD13/35 (Eng.)
30 September 1961
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

Topic 30: PLANNING FOR THE PAHO RESEARCH PROGRAMS

(Document presented by the Government of Mexico)

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE

INSTITUTES AND LABORATORIES DIVISION

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Suggestions for a research program for the Pan American Health Organization, XIII Meeting of the Directing Council of the Pan American Health Organization, XIII Meeting of the Regional Committee of the World Health Organization.

I. Research on the treatment and prevention of intestinal helminthic diseases

One of the most important problems for the countries of Latin America is that of the intestinal helminthic diseases, which affect a considerable part of the population in rural areas, especially in tropical and sub-tropical zones.

It is obvious that the final and long-term solution of the problem of intestinal helminthic diseases resides in environmental sanitation, based on health education; this solution will take years to achieve.

However, while environmental sanitation programs are being carried out, intestinal parasitoses control measures should of course be adopted, for example the mass treatment of the inhabitants of villages known to be highly infested, using emulsified tetrachloroethylene, without a purgative, either alone or in association with piperazine.

The results of field studies carried out by the Institute of Health and Tropical Diseases of the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare of Mexico have been published in the Institute's Review: "New opportunities for mass treatment for the control of helminthic diseases" (June 1959); "Associated use of tetrachloroethylene and piperazine in the simultaneous treatment of ankylostomiasis and ascariasis" (December, 1959).

These methods could be studied in various countries and adopted once the harmlessness and effectiveness of the treatment proposed by the Mexican investigators has been established.

It is also suggested that research should be carried out on the usefulness of means that interrupt the life-cycle of the principal intestinal parasites, by treating the soil with nematocides or with substances that modify the chemical characteristics of the soil itself.

This type of research is being carried out in Mexico at the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare's Station in Boca del Rio, Veracruz.

II. Geographical pathology surveys in Latin America

It is suggested that the Pan American Sanitary Bureau should collaborate with the countries concerned in geographical pathology surveys of certain diseases, as follows:

- a) Research to establish accurately the boundaries of the areas with a high prevalence of histoplasmosis, since the studies published to date indicate that this disease exists, not only in the United States of America and in Mexico, but also in certain countries in Central and South America.
- b) Epidemiological research to delimit the areas in which trachoma is endemic, since these areas have not yet been satisfactorily determined in Latin America.
- c) Research to complete our knowledge of the geographical distribution of sylvatic plague foci in the American continent, in view of the importance of this disease for international health.

III. The Pan American Sanitary Bureau might also sponsor and finance as part of its research program the search for leprostatic drugs that do not produce a leprogenic reaction, since this reaction causes many patients to abandon treatment, to the detriment of the epidemiological control of this disease.