

## Country progress on preventative chemotherapy implementation and coverage among all children at risk of STH

Alex Jones, MPA; Michael Diaz, MPH; Rubina Imtiaz, MBBS

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends countries with  $\geq 20\%$  prevalence of soil-transmitted helminthiasis (STH) at baseline provide preventive chemotherapy (PC) to preschool-age (PSAC: ages 1-4) *and* school-age children (SAC: ages 5-14). The related WHO target is  $\geq 75\%$  treatment coverage of PSAC and SAC in all countries requiring preventive chemotherapy (PC) by 2020. Using publicly available WHO data, we analyzed country progress in PC implementation and coverage among all children (ages 1-14) in countries requiring PC. From 2006 to 2016, countries requiring PC for STH decreased from 130 to 103 (-21%), while global treatment coverage for all children increased from 15% to 60%. Of countries requiring PC in 2016, 50 (49%) treated PSAC *and* SAC. Of countries requiring PC in 2016, 50 (49%) treated PSAC *and* SAC. While this is the highest proportion of countries treating both risk groups in a given year, the number of countries treating both risk groups has largely remained the same from 2006 (47) to 2016 (50). Data from the last three years bear this out; of 53 countries not providing PC to both risk groups in 2016, 38 (72%) also did not provide PC to both risk groups in 2014 or 2015. In 2016, 20 (19%) countries treated only SAC and five (5%) only treated PSAC. Of these 25 countries, only 9 (36%) reached 75% PC coverage among all children. More than half of the countries treating both risk groups reached the 75% coverage target for all children in 2016. Considering all countries, regardless of which risk group(s) they treated, 35 (34%) reached the  $\geq 75\%$  PC coverage target for all children in 2016. With the 2020 target quickly approaching, the failure to meet the coverage target across the majority of countries is concerning. And while the majority (73%) of countries conducted PC for at least one risk group in 2016, a marked 165 million (20%) children requiring PC resided in countries not conducting any PC or in countries where their risk group did not receive PC.