SCHISTOSOMIASIS
PEDIATRIC PRAZIQUANTEL CONSORTIUM
Treating preschool-aged children

• More than 700 million people at risk
• Approximately 250 million people require treatment
• Transmission has been reported from close to 80 countries
• Up to 200 thousand deaths per year
• Many disabling complications
• High infection rates in young children
• No suitable treatment for about 50 million preschool-age children

1 WHO, Schistosomiasis Fact Sheet, 1 February 2023.
Schistosomiasis is one of the most prevalent parasitic diseases in Africa, and a very important one in terms of public health burden and economic impact. Left untreated, this poverty-related disease can lead to anemia, stunted growth and impaired learning ability, as well as chronic inflammation of the organs, which can be fatal in the most serious cases.
As efforts focus on morbidity control and elimination, there is a pressing need to treat preschool-aged children (as of 6 years of age). No suitable drug is available for this high-risk group, which accounts for an estimated 50 million of the approximately 250 million people requiring treatment

THE STANDARD OF CARE TREATMENT

The existing ‘standard of care’ treatment for schistosomiasis is praziquantel (PZQ), which was developed in the 1970s. This oral anthelmintic is available as a generic drug and, in partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO), is donated by Merck for the treatment of schistosomiasis, mainly in school-aged children in Africa. It is safe and effective, and a tablet formulation is available for adults and school-aged children but not for those as of six years of age and younger.

The existing PZQ formulation is a racemic mixture of levopraziquantel (L-PZQ) and dextropraziquantel (D-PZQ). Only one of these components is pharmacologically active: the L-PZQ enantiomer. The other component, D-PZQ has been shown to be inactive and significantly contributes to the taste that makes treating young children difficult.

THE POTENTIAL NEW PEDIATRIC TREATMENT OPTION

The Pediatric Praziquantel Consortium has developed a potential new pediatric treatment option that is suitable for younger children, including infants and toddlers. The potential new pediatric treatment option is a novel (oro)dispersible tablet containing levopraziquantel (L-PZQ), the biologically active PZQ enantiomer. The new 150 mg tablets are small, allow precise dosing, and have improved taste properties for preschool-aged children.

The Consortium completed its clinical development program with positive results from the pivotal clinical Phase III trial. The program is in the regulatory phase and potentially nearing the patients in need.

1 WHO, Schistosomiasis Fact Sheet, 1 February 2023.

www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/schistosomiasis
The Consortium

The Pediatric Praziquantel Consortium was founded in July 2012 as the first international, non-profit, public-private partnership in schistosomiasis, supported by world leading experts in tropical parasitic infectious diseases.

The Consortium aims to develop, register and provide access to a pediatric medication for treating schistosomiasis in preschool-aged children, with proven efficacy and safety and acceptable taste properties. The potential new treatment option meets these criteria and also withstands the challenges presented by a tropical climate. The program is currently in the regulatory phase and preparing for equitable and sustainable access to the new medication, once registered.

The Pediatric Praziquantel Consortium is the only partnership targeting the preschool age range.

THE PEDIATRIC PRAZIQUANTEL CONSORTIUM SET-UP

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CURRENT CONSORTIUM PARTNERS

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www.pediatricpraziquantelconsortium.org