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Ignored diseases 'kill 500,000'

Millions of people are being affected annually by tropical diseases which are being ignored, claim researchers from Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine.

The diseases kill at least 500,000 people a year but are neglected by doctors, policy-makers and public health officials.

Their research is published on Tuesday in the international health journal PLoS Medicine.

It said the diseases lose out to TB, HIV and malaria.

'Make poverty history'

The neglected tropical diseases include sleeping sickness, schistosomiasis, river blindness, hookworm, elephantiasis, and blinding trachoma.

The researchers, led by Prof David Molyneux, Director of the Lymphatic Filariasis Support Centre at the tropical medicine school said four anti-parasitic drugs could treat seven neglected diseases across Africa.

They said the cost would be 25p per person, per year compared with £120 per person for HIV/AIDS, £120 to treat a single episode of TB and £4 to treat a single episode of malaria.

The researchers "urge policy makers and health economists to recognize that although HIV, TB, and malaria are the most serious problems facing health planners, other diseases exist that can be addressed at realistic costs with effective interventions".

They go on to say that controlling Africa's neglected diseases was one of the convincing ways to "make poverty history".



Elephantiasis is one of the ignored diseases said the researchers

BBC


BBC Liverpool

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