



## Largest-ever implementation study on kala-azar in Asia

Launched to support India and Bangladesh's national control Programs

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A comprehensive four-year project including over 10,000 patients in clinical and pharmacovigilance studies for diagnosis and treatment of visceral leishmaniasis (VL, also known as kala-azar) in India and Bangladesh was launched by an international consortium formed last month to support control and elimination strategies in both countries, where the concentration of disease burden is among the world's highest.

The Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi), together with OneWorld Health (OWH) and the Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR), will collaborate with the National Control Programmes of India and Bangladesh, M-decins Sans Frontières (MSF), the Bihar State Health Society, and the Indian Council for Medical Research to carry out the consortium's projects. The projects will generate the data necessary for Indian and Bangladeshi Ministries of Health to select, adopt and implement the best management strategies to support control and elimination of this deadly disease.

Kala-azar, which particularly affects women and children in remote areas, is a parasitic disease transmitted by a sandfly. It causes prolonged fever, enlarged spleen and liver, substantial weight loss, and progressive anaemia. Approximately half a million cases worldwide are recorded each year. If left untreated, the disease is fatal. From case detection and management to implementation of new treatment modalities, including liposomal amphotericin B (AmBisome-) in monotherapy and several combination therapies - with AmBisome-, miltefosine, and paromomycin - the project covers primary and secondary healthcare levels in the public, not-for-profit, and private sectors. Project strategies are tailored to the specific needs of each sector and expand upon the experience and expertise of the consortium members and regional stakeholders.