

# Preface

*There are no whole truths; all truths are half-truths. It is trying to treat them as whole truths that plays the devil.*

Alfred North Whitehead

Neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) are a group of diseases with a devastating impact on people in their prime or younger in endemic areas. Some illnesses are abrupt in onset and cured relatively easily. Others occur in chronic or subacute fashion and prove rather difficult to remedy. The impacts are partly linked to socioeconomic factors; risks of losing a daily job due to treatments, insufficient drug efficacy further increasing hospitalization necessity or stay duration, medical expenses, prevalence of fake drugs, folk remedies, and so on. Because these patients often belong to the lowest economic class, they do not have a stable place to live and move frequently, and may not retain the same cell phone number, prognostic surveillance in endemic areas is extremely difficult to conduct.

If a disease has strong infectivity and is life threatening, policy makers must cope with it immediately and completely. NTDs are not at that threat level and have been neglected historically. However, the social burden is high because the victims, often children and the prime generation in each country, become encumbrances. Visceral leishmaniasis (VL), also known as kala-azar, is a part of the spectrum of NTDs and combines all the earlier mentioned traits. Many stakeholders have contributed from the beginning of the twenty-first century in the Indian subcontinent to reducing the incidence of VL; this goal formed the basis of a memorandum of understanding shared through WHO with ministers in the countries concerned. SATREPS, funded by JICA and JST, is one of the first projects stating the necessity of simple and reliable diagnostic procedures in endemic areas. Ours has been the only project targeting NTDs from Japan until 2015.

This scope was introduced in the first edition. The present edition further explores the practical applicability of methods of disease control that have been lacking in the NTD field, and data collection is still ongoing. All of the contributing authors are experts and have devoted part of their careers, in cooperation with other

stakeholders, to VL disease control for people living in endemic areas. I hope this volume will tack the sail for disease eradication and allow it to catch the wind and make way to a speedy conclusion.

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