

Onchocerciasis in the Americas: from arrival to (near) elimination

Ke G a e ^{1*}, Adra Ho; ² a d Ma rco Sa erbre ³

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Onchocerciasis (river blindness) is a debilitating disease caused by the parasitic nematode *Onchocerca volvulus*. It is a major cause of blindness and disability in sub-Saharan Africa, where approximately 120 million people are at risk. In the Americas, the disease was introduced by the slave trade in the 16th century. Today, onchocerciasis is considered a neglected tropical disease. The disease is endemic in parts of Central and South America, including Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela. In 2012, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) launched a campaign to eliminate onchocerciasis from the Americas by 2020.

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