

Review of: "Why COVID-19 is not so spread in Africa: How does Ivermectin affect it?"

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Potential competing interests: The author(s) declared that no potential competing interests exist.

REVIEWERS COMMENTS

Title: Why Covid-19 is not so spread in Africa: How does ivermectin affect it?

This is an important study that attempts to provide explanation on the spread of covid-19 in Africa within the context of onchocerciasis intervention. The authors have provided their conclusion based on the analysis of data from endemic and non-endemic countries in Africa. Their further assumptions focus on CDTI strategy that has been a vehicle for ivermectin delivery to rural communities. The study by Hisaya et al has some issues to be addressed.

Materials

In the list of onchocerciasis endemic countries in Africa, Kenya and Rwanda were included. The authors should note that Kenya eradicated onchocerciasis way back in 1964 and they have never administered any ivermectin. Similarly, Rwanda is non-endemic for onchocerciasis and ivermectin has not been given in any community. Analysis from these countries are misleading.

The authors' objective is "to validate the effect of ivermectin intervention on covid-19" The authors have not told us how long ivermectin persist the body system. Most field studies have shown that the effect of ivermectin can persist for 3-6 months post-treatment. This retrospective analysis should have been done having confirmed that these endemic countries have administered ivermectin within a period of 3 months or more. What will you be validating if an endemic country has not conducted CDTI?

Most of the endemic countries are at different stages of onchocerciasis elimination. Some countries like Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Mali and Senegal have stopped CDTI in most areas of their countries. How reliable is the authors' analysis for these countries where ivermectin has not been in use for over 3 years?

Discussion

"Onchocerciasis-endemic countries are mainly in the medically weak areas in Sub-Saharan Africa rather than the non-endemic countries". This statement is misleading in terms of health systems in Africa. Basically there may be no significant difference in terms of services rendered at health facilities for these two categories.

Comments

The authors need to address the confounding factors that is affecting the study design. The South Africa study referred to was after administering ivermectin and indeed they validated the impact on covid-19.

Recommendation

The issues raised to be addressed providing convincing information on ivermectin and selection of countries in the retrospective analysis with their current CDTI record.

