

3 December – On 26 November, 45 high-level representatives from health partners, including Sennar State Parliament, Sudan’s Health Ministry, media, the Universities of Khartoum and Sennar, the Global Health Foundation, and WHO, gathered to push control of visceral leishmaniasis (VL, or kala-azar) in Sennar State, as part of the Kalacore programme which is generously supported by the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DfID).

Leishmaniasis is the second-largest parasitic killer after malaria, and is caused by Leishmania-type parasites. VL is the most severe form of leishmaniasis and without proper diagnosis and treatment kills over 95% of patients. In Sudan, several major epidemics of kala-azar have occurred, and currently 3000–6000 cases occur annually with 2.8% of all patients ending in death. From 1996 to 2016, Sudan has seen a total of 58170 cases and 2313 deaths, with an overall death rate of 3.98%.

Partners discussed key matters such as advocacy for VL control, how to build on and replicate the success in controlling mycetoma, another so-called [neglected tropical disease](#), and establishing a standing committee dedicated to VL prevention and control.

Dr Naeema Al Gasseer, WHO Representative for Sudan, addressed the meeting and stated: “The goal of having this diverse group together is to address the issues from several angles at once. All the experts gathered today have pooled their expertise to develop the best solutions possible.”

Some concrete outcomes of the meeting included a commitment from Sennar’s state government and Sudan’s Health Ministry to VL prevention and control, an agreement on a 2-year strategic plan for prevention and control, and a commitment from the University of Sennar to establish a research centre dedicated to VL. The established Committee will meet on a monthly basis for follow-up.

Tuesday 23rd of April 2024 11:15:45 AM