

Date: Aug. 18, 2000

From: WHO Collaborating Center for
Research, Training and Eradication of Dracunculiasis

Subject:

CDC TEAM VISITS CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, FINDS A SURPRISE

A two person team from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Mr. Aaron Zee and Dr. Marc Weisskopf, visited the Central African Republic from July 8-August 4, 2000, at the invitation of C.A.R.'s minister of health. They were asked to assist in clarifying the status of dracunculiasis in the country, and make recommendations to the national program. The team visited 29 of 32 villages with recent suspect cases near the southeastern borders with Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo, as well as the Mboki camp for Sudanese refugees. They interviewed a person who had been filmed earlier in the year with an active case of dracunculiasis, and found other evidence to suggest that there probably is indigenous dracunculiasis in C.A.R. They also found widespread confusion between dracunculiasis and onchocerciasis. They obtained worms from just beneath the skin of 3 suspect cases in 3 different areas, all of which were found to be Onchocerca upon microscopic examination at CDC. Suspect cases were more common in men than women, but more

was told that the state had recently paid 10 million naira (~US\$100,000) for a new drilling rig, to provide safe water to endemic areas. In Kebbi, he congratulated the deputy governor, state cabinet, and chairmen of 3 endemic LGAs on having provided 29 borehole wells and 44 hand dug wells to cover all endemic villages in the state, since his previous visit. In Sokoto, he met with the state commissioners for