Program Overview

Pfizer is working to help end the suffering and the cycle of poverty caused by blinding trachoma by partnering with the World Health Organization’s (WHO) Alliance for the Global Elimination of Blinding Trachoma by 2020 (GET2020), the International Trachoma Initiative (ITI) and others.

Trachoma is treatable and preventable with full implementation of the World Health Organization (WHO) recommended SAFE strategy for trachoma control (Surgery; Antibiotics — using donated Zithromax®; Facial cleanliness; and Environmental improvement) in affected communities.

Pfizer donates the Zithromax needed to implement the SAFE strategy and reach the goal of elimination.

Health Challenge

Trachoma is an infectious eye disease caused by repeated infection by the bacterium Chlamydia trachomatis. It is the world’s leading cause of preventable blindness. About 21.4 million people, mostly women and children, in 53 endemic countries have active trachoma infection and need treatment. Another 8.2 million people are estimated to have an advanced stage of the disease, called trichiasis, in which the eyelashes turn inward and scrape the cornea. People with trichiasis face the risk of visual impairment or blindness unless treated with antibiotics and a simple surgical procedure.

The poorest of the poor suffer most from trachoma, particularly those with limited access to water and sanitation. Because trachoma is transmitted through close personal contact, it tends to occur in clusters — often infecting entire families and communities. Globally, an estimated 325 million people live in trachoma-endemic areas.

In 1998, Pfizer and the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation co-established the ITI, an independent not-for-profit organization dedicated to the elimination of blinding trachoma. Housed at The Task Force for Global Health, ITI manages Pfizer’s global donation of the antibiotic Zithromax and collaborates with governmental and nongovernmental agencies at local, national and international levels to implement the SAFE strategy. Pfizer also funds a significant portion of ITI’s activities worldwide.

Partners


Results

- To date, Pfizer has donated more than 280 million Zithromax treatments to people in 21 countries.
- Morocco became the first country to reach its trachoma elimination goals and awaits WHO certification that blinding trachoma has been eliminated as a public health problem.
- Three countries in which ITI has worked are on track to eliminate blinding trachoma: The Gambia, Ghana and Vietnam.

Visit www.trachoma.org and www.trachomacoalition.org to learn more about the ITI and to download brochures, annual reports, newsletters, photos and stories about people making a difference in the field.

The International Trachoma Initiative (ITI) is part of Pfizer’s corporate social investment strategy that focuses on leveraging the full range of the company’s resources — people, medicines, expertise and funding — to broaden access to medicines and strengthen health care delivery for underserved people around the world. For more information, please visit www.pfizer.com/responsibility