HANDBOOK OF

Helminthiasis for Public Health
Preface and Purpose

Public health attends to the health of communities rather than individuals. Public health professionals apply biomedical knowledge and environmental technology to improve and sustain the health of the communities they serve. The effectiveness of public health interventions is measured by decline in human incapacity and increase in human well-being, self-esteem, and prosperity. In September 2000, the member states of the United Nations adopted an unprecedented global commitment to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Public health is a major item in this agenda for development and resources from wealthy nations will be needed if the justifiable demands from impoverished nations for the implementation of public health interventions are to be met. Helminthiasis, the assemblage of diseases that accompany helminth infections, affects the health and productivity of millions of poor people in developing countries. The control of helminthiasis falls unquestionably into the purview of the Millennium Development Goals.

Major efforts, based on partnerships between those in need and those with resources, are already dealing with dracunculiasis, lymphatic filariasis, and onchocerciasis. New partnerships are emerging to tackle schistosomiasis and soil-transmitted helminthiasis. Experience shows, however, that global health problems such as smallpox and poliomyelitis are not solved overnight. Years of work by dedicated public health workers and supportive communities are essential if lasting success is to be secured.

The purpose of *Handbook of Helminthiasis for Public Health* is to assist public health workers now and in the future with the daunting task of reducing the burden of helminthiasis. We also hope that the book will be a useful source of information to all teachers and students of helminthology. A special challenge has been to draw attention to the uniqueness of the human host. This is not simply a matter of human DNA and the information it carries. Human-helminth interactions are determined to a large extent by social, cultural, economic, and political influences in addition to the biological principles that are considered to underpin host-helminth relationships elsewhere in the natural world. Interventions to control helminthiasis have to be adapted to the lifestyles of people in communities where helminth infections are entrenched.

The Internet provides many of us with access to journals on line and facilities to search for sources of information. During one search for information about a particular theme, the computer screen displayed 20 citations and carried a message to say that 835 additional pages of citations were awaiting inspection. Despite much work, we know that the literature we have cited in this book is but a smattering of what is available about human-helminth relationships and how to control helminthiasis. We hope our choice will serve as a guide to the knowledge awaiting application for the benefit of those in need.

D.W.T. Crompton and Lorenzo Savioli

Glasgow and Geneva
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We thank the copyright holders who granted us permission to use their property; acknowledgment can be found in figure captions and table titles, and traced through the reference lists at the end of the chapters. We have tried to contact all relevant copyright owners and comply with their conditions. Changes in the publishing industry seem to have been accompanied by changes in copyright ownership and so we apologize for any oversights or omissions that have unintentionally occurred in our acknowledgments. We also wish to acknowledge the excellent facilities, comprehensive resources, and helpful staff in the libraries of the University of Glasgow, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the World Health Organization in Geneva, and in the Wellcome Library for the History and Understanding of Medicine. PubMed has proved to be a marvellous source of information.

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