

Recognizing Buruli ulcer in *your* community



World Health
Organization

Buruli ulcer is a disease caused by a germ

- Buruli ulcer **is not** caused by witchcraft
- Buruli ulcer **is not** due to a curse
- Buruli ulcer **is not** a punishment
- You **cannot** get Buruli ulcer through contact with an affected person

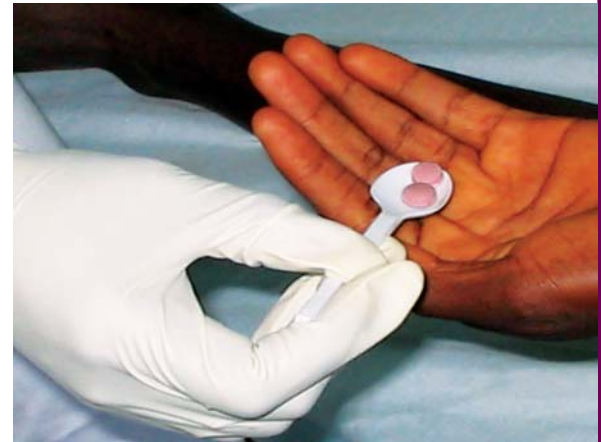
Buruli ulcer is a disease



Buruli ulcer can be cured

- Buruli ulcer is a disease caused by a germ which affects mainly **the skin**, but sometimes it can also affect the bones.
- Buruli ulcer is found in many places around the world, often **near water bodies**; the exact mode of transmission of the germ from the environment to humans is not known.
- Buruli ulcer can affect anyone at any age, but **children are most often affected**.
- Buruli ulcer mainly affects the **arms and legs**, but it can affect any part of the body.
- Buruli ulcer is **treated in hospital** with specific drugs and by surgery.
- Buruli ulcer **disability** can be prevented through early interventions.
- **Early diagnosis and treatment** of Buruli ulcer are very important in preventing serious complications.

Buruli ulcer can be cured



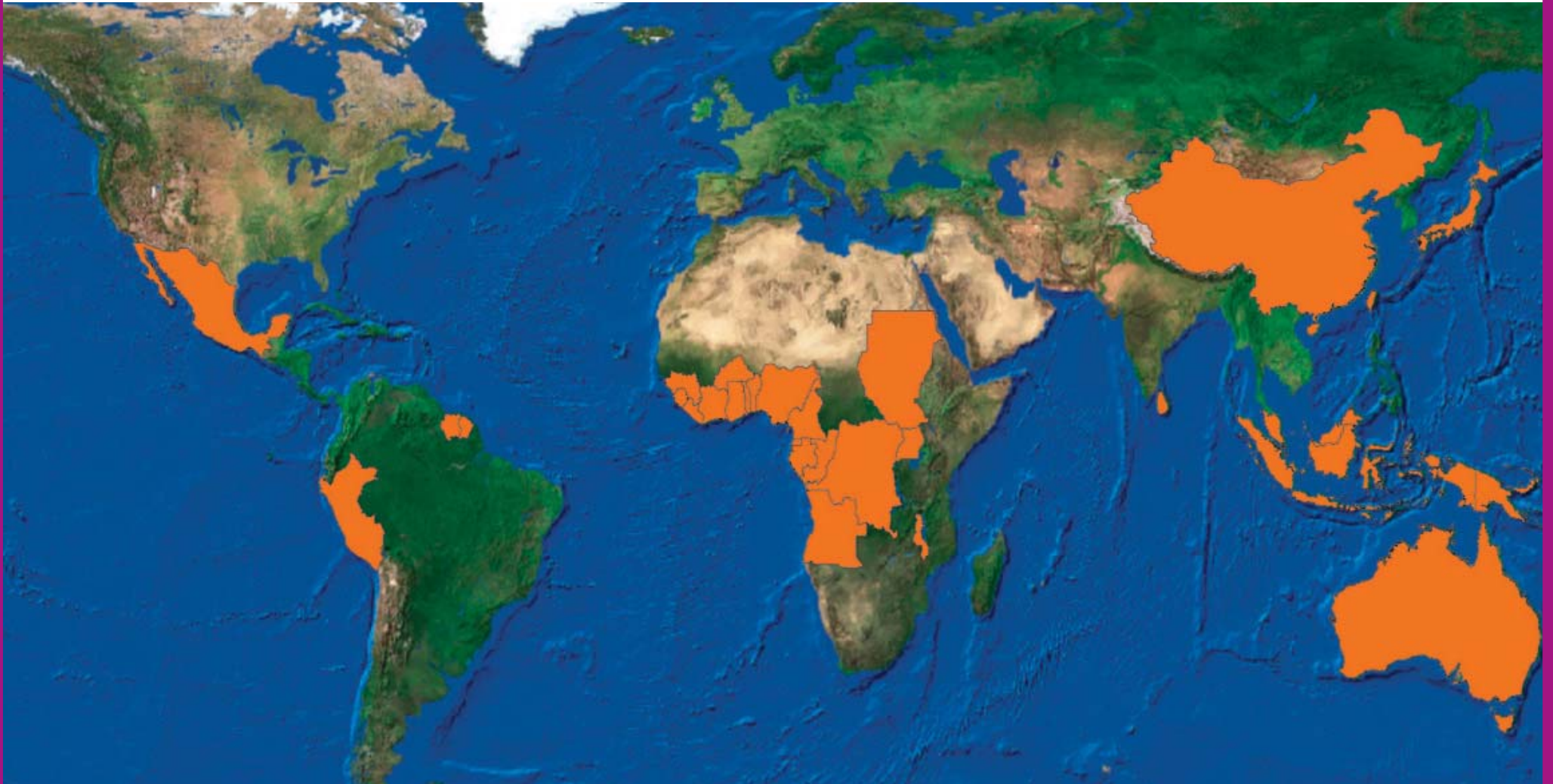
Buruli ulcer: global distribution

➔ Today, Buruli ulcer has been reported in **30 countries** but the disease is not well-known and is therefore under-reported.

Within each country, Buruli ulcer occurs in some specific places, often in wet areas.

The Ministry of Health in your country will provide information on where Buruli ulcer occurs and how many cases have been reported.

Buruli ulcer: global distribution



environmental factors

➔ Buruli ulcer often occurs in places near **water bodies**, for example slow-flowing rivers, ponds, swamps, lakes...

The germ that causes Buruli ulcer lives in a wet environment but the exact place is not known.

It is suspected that some water insects may transmit the disease.

environmental factors



nodule

→ A **nodule** is a small painless swelling under the skin of about 3 centimetres in diameter.

This is often the beginning of the disease but only a few affected people go to hospital at this stage.

At the nodular stage, treatment is simple and prevents deformities.

plaque

→ A **plaque** is a large painless swelling of more than 3 centimetres in diameter with clearly marked borders.

The skin feels hard like cardboard.

Treatment of this form of the disease can be difficult.

People affected should be advised to go to hospital without delay.

nodule



plaque



oedema

→ **Oedema** is a large painless swelling; it often involves the arms and the legs.

Treatment of this form of the disease is difficult.

People affected should be advised to go to hospital without delay.

ulcer

→ Typical **ulcers** are not very painful; they have undermined edges and often have whitish-yellowish slough in the centre.

With good treatment, small ulcers can heal with no deformity. Unfortunately, most people affected do not go to hospital at this stage.

Large ulcers are very common because most people affected wait until it is too late. These ulcers often lead to serious deformities and treatment at this stage is very difficult and expensive. Any person who has an ulcer should be advised to go to hospital without delay.

oedema



ulcer



arms and legs deformities

→ Arms and legs with **deformities** like these are common because affected people often go to hospital too late.

It is important to inform the community about the serious complications that can result from Buruli ulcer and advise those affected to go to hospital without delay.

trunk and face deformities

→ Trunk and face **deformities** like these are common because affected people often go to hospital too late.

Sometimes the eyes are damaged, which may lead to blindness.

Complications like these can be avoided if people affected would go to hospital without delay.

arms and legs deformities



trunk and face deformities



no deformity, no disability

➔ When Buruli ulcer is identified and treated rapidly, simple surgery is needed. The affected people will only have a small scar but **no deformity and no disability.**

Today, some specific drugs can be used to treat Buruli ulcer.

When a person with a nodule or small ulcer goes to hospital rapidly, surgery may then be avoided.

no deformity, no disability



cancer

➔ If Buruli ulcers are not properly treated, they may turn into **cancer** after some years.

Usually, traditional treatments used for Buruli ulcer leave bad scars that can easily develop into cancer.

Cancers are painful, have rough surfaces and bleed very easily.

Sometimes, people mistake cancers for Buruli ulcer.

Any person who has an ulcer that looks like this should go to hospital without delay.

amputation

➔ In some late and severe cases, **amputation** is necessary.

People who have been amputated or who have other deformities should receive appropriate rehabilitation assistance.

The community should also help these people to be part of the society.

cancer



amputation



what can *you* do?

- **You** can be **the link** between your community and the health centres or hospitals.
- **You** can help to **increase awareness** about Buruli ulcer in your community to encourage those affected to report rapidly.
- **You** can **identify people** with suspected Buruli ulcer, register and refer them to the nearest health centre or hospital.
- **You** can help to **manage simple cases** and supervise those on drug treatment in your community.
- **You** can **support and follow up** people who have returned to the community after treatment at health centres or hospitals.

Community registration of Buruli ulcer

DISTRICT _____ NAME OF COMMUNITY _____

No.	Date	Name	Age	Sex	Patient classification		Location of lesions	Clinical forms	Referred	
					New	Recurrent			Yes	No
1										
2										
3										
4										
5										
6										
7										
8										
9										
10										
11										
12										
13										

Name/signature of the community health worker _____

Buruli ulcer complications are preventable: go to hospital without delay!



Global Buruli Ulcer Initiative

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<http://www.anesvad.org/buruli/pub/ingl/home.htm>



<http://www.who.int/buruli/en>