

Policy Brief- WHA 72- The need for Global Action to Reduce Snakebite Death and Disability

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THE SNAKEBITE BURDEN

Snakebite envenoming kills 81,000-138,000 people every year and permanently disables 400,000 more. Rural workers in impoverished communities in sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and Asia are at greatest risk. The majority of snakebite victims have poor access to basic health services. Because antivenom is frequently unavailable at healthcare facilities, its price so high, and its quality often dubious, many snakebite victims seek alternative—typically ineffective—treatment from traditional healers. Snakebite patients who do receive proper medical treatment are often forced further into poverty, even destitution. The costs to individuals and their families, communities and their countries are staggering.

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