Now We Are Six

Peter J. Hotez1,2,3*, Serap Aksoy4*

1 Sabin Vaccine Institute and Texas Children’s Hospital Center for Vaccine Development, Departments of Pediatrics and Molecular Virology & Microbiology, Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, Texas, United States of America, 2 National School of Tropical Medicine, Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, Texas, United States of America, 3 James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy, Rice University, Houston, Texas, United States of America, 4 Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, Division of Epidemiology of Microbial Diseases, Yale University School of Public Health, New Haven, Connecticut, United States of America

* E-mail: hotez@bcm.edu (PJH); serap.aksoy@yale.edu (SA)

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* E-mail: hotez@bcm.edu (PJH); serap.aksoy@yale.edu (SA)

Peter Hotez and Serap Aksoy are the Co-Editors-in-Chief of PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases. Peter Hotez, MD, PhD, FASTMH, FAAP, is the Professor of Pediatrics and Molecular Virology & Microbiology, and Dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine, Baylor College of Medicine; Head of the Section of Pediatric Tropical Medicine and Texas Children’s Hospital Endowed Chair of Tropical Pediatrics, Texas Children’s Hospital; and Baker Institute Fellow in Disease and Poverty, Rice University. He is also President of the Sabin Vaccine Institute. Serap Aksoy is Professor of Epidemiology and Public Health at Yale University School of Public Health.
A word about journal scope: since our beginning we have tried to stay focused on the major NTDs afflicting the “bottom billion”, i.e., the world’s 1.4 billion people who live in poverty and are disproportionately affected by these conditions [2]. We have subsequently responded to an increasing demand from the arbovirus community (especially regarding dengue papers) and experts in neglected bacterial and fungal infections (e.g., leptospirosis, mycobacterial infections such as Buruli ulcer and leprosy, and paracoccidioidomycosis) by increasing our editorial board representation in these areas. We also look
forward to continuing our long-standing commitment to papers on neglected helminth and protozoan infections. In contrast, we have largely avoided papers that deal with falciparum malaria unless they also mention collateral effects on the NTDs. Instead, we feel there are excellent journals already out there that can handle such papers, including the open-access *Malaria Journal*. However, we have listened to the scientists and health professionals who make a compelling case that vivax malaria is a true NTD and have been reviewing papers on this disease for several years now. We anticipate that the scope of *PLOS NTDs* will continue to evolve and invite our readers to visit the journal scope section of our website and even to submit editorials that make a strong argument why the scope may require amendment or adjustment.

As our journal expands and grows, we are working hard to ensure that papers submitted to *PLOS NTDs* receive a timely review and decision. Together with our deputy editors and associate editors, the *PLOS* editorial staff based in San Francisco and now also Cambridge, United Kingdom, meets continually to review its procedures and seeks ways to improve the quality of our reviews and shorten timelines. Currently, new research articles receive their first decision on average within 40 days of initial submission. Manuscripts that do not get sent to review receive a rapid response form the journal; on average, these decisions are sent to authors within 13 days of submission. Once a paper has been accepted, it spends an average of 46 days in production until publication. However, we feel these numbers can also be improved, and in the coming months we look forward to implementing revised or new practices and procedures to achieve those goals.

In addition to its long-standing commitment to excellent and high quality science, in the coming years *PLOS NTDs* will continue a strong emphasis on advocacy and shaping NTD health and economic policy. We feel that our papers have helped to inform, advocate, and ultimately shape important financial commitments from the US and UK governments to support global NTD control and elimination efforts, as well as research and development for new control tools, i.e., drugs, insecticides, diagnostics, and vaccines. We believe that *PLOS NTDs* papers have also positively influenced government leaders and key private donors.

In this issue, we present two special collections of articles published to date that have received a disproportionately frequent number of viewings. The first is a series of review articles contributed by Dr. Hotez and his colleagues on geopolitical aspects of the NTDs, including information on the distribution of the most important NTDs in South Asia, Central Asia, Oceania, Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, the US, and the Canadian Arctic, published in *PLOS NTDs* over the last five years. The second collection, “Top Ten”, celebrates the success of the most viewed research articles—the top two in each year of our existence to date. We are also looking to feature and celebrate the achievements of our global community of NTD scientists and institutions with a series of Historical Profiles and Perspectives that will be published in the course of the coming year. The inaugural Historical Profile will highlight Centro Internacional de Entrenamiento e Investigaciones Médicas (CIDEIM) from Cali, Colombia. We want to get to know you better and learn from your experiences and achievements—please contribute to this series!

Finally, we want to thank our outstanding managing editorial staff led by Marina Kukso in the San Francisco office, and the unwavering support of the *PLOS* leadership and board. To restate, our major purpose remains to serve the NTD community of scholars and public health experts. We exist for your benefit and look forward to hearing from you on the ways in which we can improve how we can help the world’s “bottom billion” afflicted by the NTDs.

**Acknowledgments**

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**References**


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**Table 1. Top countries by number of submissions.**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of Submissions</th>
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</table>

**Figure 2. Papers submitted and published by region between October 2007 and July 2012.**

![Papers Submitted & Published by Region](image)