

# Evidence Update

Child Health Series

April 2004

## Does albendazole improve the control and treatment of filariasis?

There is not enough evidence to confirm or refute whether albendazole, given alone or co-administered with DEC or ivermectin, has an effect on lymphatic filariasis.

### Inclusion criteria

#### Studies:

Randomised, and quasi-randomised controlled trials, including trials randomised by cluster.

#### Participants:

People with filarial infection (defined as microfilariae parasites or filarial antigens in the blood; or adult worms in lymphatic vessels detected by ultrasound); or communities resident in endemic filarial areas.

#### Intervention:

Albendazole versus placebo.  
Albendazole + DEC versus DEC alone.  
Albendazole + ivermectin versus ivermectin alone.

#### Outcomes:

Microfilaraemia; live adult worms detected by ultrasound; measures of filarial antigen.  
Any adverse events that prevent daily activities or require hospitalisation; systemic adverse events.

### Results

Four small studies met the inclusion criteria (2473 participants, of whom 536 had detectable microfilariae). Two were adequately concealed.

- The two placebo-controlled studies demonstrated no effect of albendazole on microfilaraemia (RR 0.97, 95%CI 0.87 to 1.09, n = 195).
- Two studies compared the effect of albendazole plus ivermectin to ivermectin alone on the presence of microfilaraemia. Results were mixed: one study showed the combination to be more effective (RR 0.27, 95% CI 0.11 to 0.70, n = 52), but the other did not demonstrate a statistically significant difference (RR 1.04, 95% CI 0.87 to 1.25, n = 145).
- One study compared albendazole plus DEC to DEC alone and did not demonstrate a difference in microfilaraemia prevalence (RR 1.57, 95% CI .44 to 5.60, n = 35).

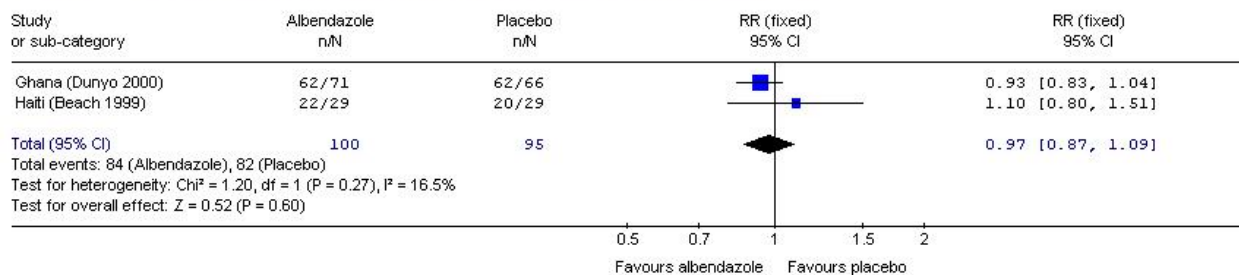


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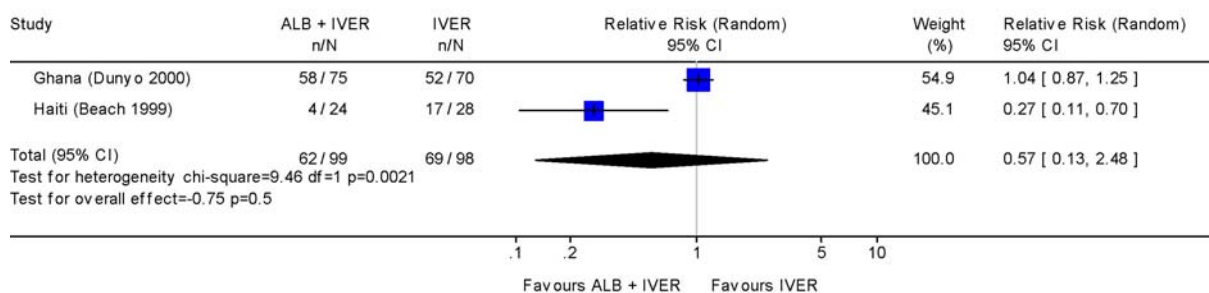
Adapted from International Filariasis Review Group (David Addiss, Julia Critchley, Henry Ejere, Paul Garner, Hellen Gelband, Carrol Gamble). Albendazole for lymphatic filariasis (Cochrane Review). In: The Cochrane Library, Issue 1, 2004. Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Produced by the Effective Health Care Alliance Programme, Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, supported by the Department of International Development UK, (<http://www.liv.ac.uk/evidence>).

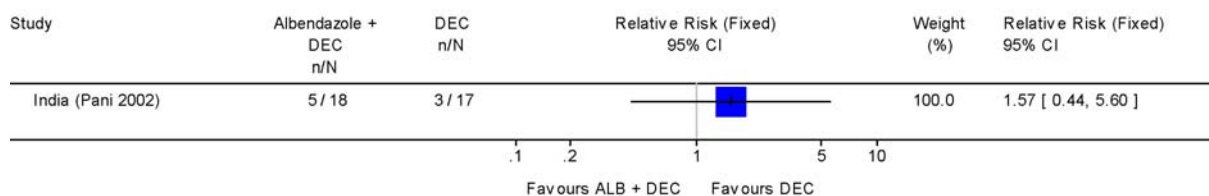
Review: Albendazole for lymphatic filariasis  
 Comparison: 01 Albendazole versus placebo  
 Outcome: 05 Microfilaraemia in participants microfilariae positive at baseline (microfilariae negative excluded)



Review: Albendazole for lymphatic filariasis  
 Comparison: 03 Albendazole plus ivermectin versus ivermectin  
 Outcome: 05 Microfilaraemia in participants microfilariae positive at baseline (microfilariae negative excluded)



Review: Albendazole for lymphatic filariasis  
 Comparison: 05 Albendazole plus DEC versus DEC  
 Outcome: 01 Microfilaraemia



## Reviewer's conclusions

### Implications for practice:

Data are limited. There is insufficient evidence to confirm or refute that albendazole has any effect alone or in combination against microfilaraemia.

### Implications for research:

Further large well-designed studies are required.