

**Prince Mahidol Award Laureate 2019
in the Field of Public Health**



Professor David Mabey

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Professor David Mabey received his Bachelor and Doctorate of Medicine degrees from Oxford University, United Kingdom. In 1994, he was appointed Professor of Communicable Diseases at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine. He is currently Professor of Communicable Diseases, Clinical Research Department at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, United Kingdom

Professor Mabey has studied trachoma, the most common eye infection leading to blindness worldwide for more than 30 years. Trachoma is caused by the bacterium *Chlamydia trachomatis*. It is responsible for the blindness or visual impairment of about 1.9 million people globally annually. Infection spreads through personal contact and by flies that have been in contact with discharge from the eyes or nose of an infected person, particularly in developing countries with inadequate hygiene, crowded households, and inadequate access to water and sanitation.

Since early 1980s, Professor Mabey and his colleagues conducted a field work in Gambia and Tanzania and discovered that trachoma blindness is caused by the host immune response to the bacterial infection. In 1993, it was discovered that a single dose of azithromycin was effective for treatment of trachoma. He later set up a multicentre study to demonstrate that annual treatments given to whole communities was effective in reducing transmission of trachoma, and the elimination of disease can be achieved by a mass treatment of azithromycin in endemic communities.

The research of Professor Mabey prompted the World Health Organization (WHO) to establish a global eradication program using SAFE strategy - (S) control through surgery, (A) mass treatment with antibiotic, (F) face washing, and (E) environmental and sanitation improvements. More than 700 million doses of azithromycin were provided to people in 40 countries between 1999 - 2017. Until now, 13 countries have reportedly achieved the goals of eradicating trachoma. The WHO projections suggest that trachoma will be eradicated as a public health problem and cause of blindness in all countries by 2025.

Professor Mabey has published his research of more than 200 articles in renowned journals. He was a recipient of many awards in the area of tropical health and was appointed the Commander of the British Empire (CBE) in 2014 by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II for services to health development in Asia and Africa. With his continuing endeavour to control and eradicate trachoma blindness that has improved the livelihood of millions of people throughout the world.