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THE DAILY CALIFORNIAN  
Monday, August 24, 2020

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RESEARCH & IDEAS

MONDAY, AUGUST 24, 2020

### Deworming children in sub-Saharan Africa produces long-term benefits, study finds



SYLVIE MOULIN/COURTESY

Researchers found that children in Kenya who received more deworming treatment earned an hourly wage 13% higher than those who received less deworming treatment, and they were more likely as adults to work in nonagricultural fields and live in urban areas.

BY [AMANDA MCNAMARA](#) | STAFF

LAST UPDATED 6 HOURS AGO

A study led by UC Berkeley researchers and published Aug. 3 found that deworming children in sub-Saharan Africa produces long-term benefits in adulthood.

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Co-author and postdoctoral scholar at the campus Center for Effective Global Action Michael Walker said the study focused on children in Kenya over a period of 20 years. Researchers found that children who received more deworming treatment earned an hourly wage 13% higher than those who received less deworming treatment, and they were more likely as adults to work in nonagricultural fields and live in urban areas.

“We’ve been working for a long time trying to understand the connection between health and economic development,” said lead author and campus economics professor Edward Miguel. “We found that the children of the study from 20-something years ago, who benefited from a few years of additional health assistance, had higher incomes and higher living standards as adults.”

The study implies the economic return in instituting more deworming programs could be large and cost-effective, as deworming costs less than \$1 per child per year, according to Miguel. He added that the study found these programs yield long-term benefits and should be an investment priority.

Walker noted that the rate of return for a dollar spent is 37%, and by investing in the child’s health, investors will see these high long-term returns.

As a result of COVID-19 causing Kenyan schools to close, school-based deworming programs have been disrupted, according to Miguel.

“Communities that are already poor and disadvantaged are only disadvantaged further,” Miguel said. “School closures do make it harder to deliver these essential services. We need to find ways to deliver them even in this COVID era.”

In terms of what the Berkeley community can do as global citizens to help, Miguel said he recommends investing in deworming through charity donations. Donating gives people hope and offers a concrete way for donors to make a difference in the world, Miguel added.

GiveWell is a nonprofit organization, which, according to Berkeley News, partly funded the study. GiveWell senior outreach research analyst Catherine Hollander said the organization has been recommending deworming programs since 2011.

“Deworming is still one of the most cost-effective programs in GiveWell’s history of looking for programs that improve the lives of the global poor,” Hollander said.

Contact Amanda McNamara at [amandamcnamara@dailycal.org](mailto:amandamcnamara@dailycal.org) and follow her on Twitter at [@amandamcnamara\\_uc](https://twitter.com/amandamcnamara_uc).

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