

ENFANTS DU MONDE

**Observations on the effects of the consumption of
Lucerne Leaf Concentrate (LLC)
in Burkina Faso (Province of Yatenga)
June 2002 – January 2004**

The fight against NOMA (*Cancrum oris*)

In the context of the struggle against Noma, *Enfants du Monde* (EDM) intervenes with both cure and prevention. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) there is, in the developing world, an annual toll of 100,000 new cases of Noma, which is a sort of galloping gangrene that destroys the face.

80,000 die; the rest are rejected as if leprous.

1. EDM finances an annual surgical mission to operate overseas on children to repair the ravages of the disease (which destroys gums, jawbones, nose, cheeks, lips and eyelids). The 2003 mission to Niger operated on 41 children.
2. EDM's preventative action is to fight the main cause of Noma, malnutrition.

WHO IS HELPED BY LLC ?

It will soon be two years since we began distributing LLC in remote villages of Yatenga Province in the north-west of Burkina Faso.

Today a thousand malnourished children (with weight/height or weight/age of -2 or -3 standard deviations according to the WHO classification) are getting LLC in the villages of Sanh, Bogoya, Tougou, Wedransin, Soumiaga, Kombane and Bissigue as well as the town of Ouahigouya. This LLC is distributed free of charge every week in order to maintain contact with the families.

DISTRIBUTION

Each child takes 10 g LLC daily. To make this simple we decided to package the daily dose in sealed plastic sachets using an automatic machine that can deliver 5 g or 10 g sachets at the rate of 30 a minute.

All these children are registered in a notebook (one at each site) and each is identified by a number, for there are many with the same names. In this way we can keep track of the families and see who doesn't attend regularly.

The basal diet is often inadequate and in several villages where we distribute LLC we also (with the aid of another association, "La Maison des femmes") teach mothers to enrich their porridges with inexpensive local produce.

Most children take their LLC mixed into a stew based on millet or sorghum, for which LLC is a perfect complement.

OBSERVATIONS

These observations were made without the benefit of a doctor or clinic.

The children were weighed monthly by EDM's resident staff member. We found an average monthly weight gain of about 800 g. At the same time we noted a diminution of respiratory problems, of anaemia, diarrhoea and oedema as well as a changed outward appearance which, alone, could be enough to tell the story (an increase in vitality; apathetic children beginning to play again....).

Pregnant women, at term, have better weight and so their babies are healthier; and while breast-feeding they have more abundant milk.

AIMS

We anticipate, for 2004, giving LLC to 1500 children and this programme will continue for several years.

We have already supplemented the diets of 1000 children. Meanwhile not a single case of Noma has arisen.

This report is the result of observations made "in the bush", far from any clinic or medical follow-up. It would seem logical that the international medical community should take note of these results and set about rigorously checking them with resources commensurate with their potential significance.

Recently EDM, with two other associations (AMMIE & VIE POSITIVE), have started giving LLC to sufferers from AIDS. This has only just begun with the aim of confirming the very satisfactory results announced in several countries in this context. This will be the subject of a more careful study, supervised by a doctor, and should take at least 12 months. An interim report on preliminary results should be available in May 2004.

Saint Laurent du Var; 4th March, 2004.
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