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**Thinking about snakebite from a public health perspective**

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Historically, snakebite has predominantly been considered from a medical model. This is reflected in the large number of publications from hospitals. The number of community studies are increasing and a public health perspective is needed to understand the broader problem of snakebite.

The number of bites, envenomed cases and deaths are the basic data to collect but consistent use of population rates, and the ratios and relationships between these indicators need to be better understood. Supporting data will involve understanding morbidity, and snake distribution mapping. It is important to understand the challenges of regional variations relating to data.

Public health will focus on decreasing the number of bites as a method of decreasing the number of deaths. Agent, host and environment and their interaction all need to be studied. Social determinants of health need careful consideration as does the cultural/religious/spiritual issues relating to snakes and snakebites. Understanding how other areas of public health have successfully worked with traditional practitioners will be important in improving outcomes, especially in areas of limited resources. Technology, especially Geographical Information Systems, has potential to support the research required. Snakebite management needs to part of disaster mitigation/management especially in areas prone to flooding.