

# Abstract of the Fourth Hideyo Noguchi Africa Prize Lecture at Nippon Medical School

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## The Serpents Tale: The Trials and Tribulations of Eradicating Guinea Worm Disease

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Mr. Adam Weiss is the Director of the Carter Center's Guinea Worm Eradication Program. In this capacity, Mr. Weiss works in conjunction with the World Health Organization and the U.S Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to provide technical assistance to national eradication programs, and to monitor and disseminate information about the status of the global campaign.

Mr. Weiss will present on the Carter Center's Guinea Worm Eradication Program, the recipient organization of the Fourth Hideyo Noguchi Africa Prize for Medical Services. A neglected tropical disease, Guinea worm disease (dracunculiasis) is a parasitic infection caused by the nematode roundworm parasite *Dracunculus medinensis*. It is contracted when people consume water from stagnant sources contaminated with Guinea worm larvae. In 1986, the disease afflicted an estimated 3.5 million people a year in 21 countries in Africa and Asia. Today, thanks to the work of The Carter Center and its partners, including the countries themselves, the incidence of Guinea worm has been reduced by more than 99.99 percent to 13 human cases in 2022.

Mr. Weiss's presentation will discuss the biological nature of the disease, the public health strategies being applied and the research underway to accelerate the interruption of transmission. Guinea worm disease could become the second human disease in history, after smallpox, to be eradicated, and it would be the first parasitic disease to be eradicated as well as the first disease to be eradicated without the use of a vaccine or medicine.