

Appendix B.—Method for Analysis of Tropical Disease Research Funding

Description of Methodology

Much of the information included in OTA'S analysis of tropical disease research funding in chapter 3 was taken from documents made available by the organizations that fund biomedical research in tropical diseases. These documents were supplemented, in many cases, by discussions with relevant officials of the organizations. Some organizations assembled information specifically for OTA'S analysis.

Limitations of the Data

One difficulty in developing information about funding for research on tropical diseases is that the researcher can never be sure that every relevant funding source has been identified. The sources of funding described in OTA'S analysis may not include every funding source, but do include the great majority of organizations engaged in tropical disease research funding in the United States.

A second difficulty in developing information about tropical disease research funding is that organizations vary in the definitions they use for biomedical research activities. Because of the attention that has been given to the six tropical diseases included in the Special Program for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR), many organizations identify research efforts in these diseases specifically. In some cases, however, research activities that may be directly relevant to one of these diseases may be allocated to another research type when data are reported.

TDR, for example, reports disease-specific information for malaria, schistosomiasis, trypanosomiasis, leishmaniasis, filariasis, and leprosy, but has additional separate categories for transdisease research. Transdisease research, such as investigations in vector biology and control, may or may not be directly concerned with any one of the six TDR diseases. Thus, without reviewing the research project proposals or protocols for each transdisease investigation, a researcher may not be able to determine how funds are allocated among the six diseases. The figures for TDR in OTA'S analysis exclude TDR projects funded under the transdisease categories, except in the sections of the analysis concerned with research objectives and recipients.

The basis of the classification scheme used to collect and store information about biomedical research

activities at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) is the causative organism. NIAID compiles data on research in the six diseases of TDR for its own reporting purposes, and these data are used in OTA'S analysis. However, NIAID research on diarrheal diseases and acute respiratory infections (ARIs) is identifiable only by causative agent, and for the most part lies outside the areas identifiable as tropical disease research.

Information about the U.S. Agency for International Development's (AID) funding program is difficult to break down beyond broad categories of expenditure, because funds are allocated to categories which may include several grants and contracts concerned with similar objectives but with different timetables. Lists of awards made through AID's Small Grants Program are available from the Office of the Science Advisor and the National Research Council's Board on Science and Technology for International Development (BOSTID). However, these lists identify the date of the award, but do not identify the funding level for each award by year. For this reason, OTA used the total amount of grant funds committed in the year in which the grant was awarded.

The information about the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) in chapter 3 was provided by officials at the U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command, who were kind enough to compile the data according to the study criteria. The officials reported to OTA that DOD data are not routinely collected by disease type, but rather by managerial funding category. The officials also pointed out that the precise amount of funds for each category may vary as priorities are reassessed and changes made in allocations.

Data about the tropical disease research activities of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) were assembled for OTA by the Centers' Financial Management Office.

The Rockefeller Foundation and the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation publish a list of awards made each year. By reviewing this list, OTA was able to allocate awards to the appropriate categories of interest.

Pharmaceutical companies do not make data available detailing their commitment to biomedical research. The information in OTA'S analysis about pharmaceutical companies, therefore, is not complete and is largely anecdotal.