

Deadly diseases overlooked for too long, scientists say

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Decades of neglect have allowed infectious diseases to devastate the lives of thousands of people in the developing world, a study reveals.

Researchers say three diseases in particular – anthrax, brucellosis and [bovine tuberculosis](#) – have failed to receive the official recognition and funding needed to combat them effectively.

All three impact greatly on human and animal health in developing nations, posing a major threat to safe and plentiful food supplies.

The disorders – known as zoonotic diseases – are spread between animals and humans. They are common in societies where poverty is widespread, and where people rely on animals for their livelihood.

Researchers at the University of Edinburgh reviewed every meeting of the World Health Organization's decision-making body since its formation in 1948.

Their findings reveal that the diseases have been neglected because they mostly arise in developing countries. Scientists say the diseases have been eliminated or brought under control in more developed countries, as simple and effective controls are available.

Poor healthcare infrastructure in affected countries can often mean that thousands of sufferers are left un-diagnosed. This presents huge challenges to health professionals, policy makers and researchers in their

efforts to combat the diseases.

Scientists say the adoption of a multidisciplinary One Health approach – involving experts from a range of disciplines – could improve human and [animal health](#) and help to control the diseases.

Findings from the study, funded by the European Commission, are published in the journal *PLoS Neglected Tropical Diseases*.

Professor Sue Welburn, Director of the University of Edinburgh's Global Health Academy, who led the study, said: "It is extraordinary that in the 21st century we are failing to manage brucellosis and the other neglected [zoonotic diseases](#) that impact so severely on rural communities in developing economies when, for many of these diseases, the tools to manage them are well developed."

Provided by University of Edinburgh

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