

Distribution of intermediate snail hosts and their infection status with *Schistosoma* spp.: Lake Malawi, Mangochi District

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The HUGS (Hybridisation in UroGenital Schistosomiasis) study is a 4-year Wellcome Trust funded collaboration between the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine and the Malawi-Liverpool-Wellcome Trust Clinical Research Centre. This project incorporates several environmental surveys spaced at intervals of around three months to assess the abundance of intermediate snail hosts and their infection status of *Schistosoma* spp. Environmental surveys were conducted at sites in Mangochi District, Malawi. Collecting sites incorporate locations on the shores of Lake Malawi as well as locations in surrounding water bodies and the Shire River as it feeds into the lake. The HUGS project is primarily aimed at identifying hybrids of *Schistosoma haematobium*-group trematodes and as part of this project the distribution of the *Bulinus* spp. snails that act as intermediate hosts for these parasites is investigated. However, due to a recent outbreak of intestinal schistosomiasis in Mangochi District the *Biomphalaria* spp. intermediate hosts of *Schistosoma mansoni* are also under investigation. Here we report the findings of recent surveys in relation to the distribution of *Bulinus* spp. and *Biomphalaria* spp. in Mangochi District, Malawi and their status with either patent or pre-patent infections. We also report the methodology and preliminary results behind a novel and high-throughput high resolution melt-curve (HRM) real-time PCR assay designed to rapidly identify *S. haematobium*-group hybrids.