

Sleeping sickness in Kenya Maasailand

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Abstract

Sleeping sickness is one of the most harmful diseases in East Africa and the tsetse an ecologically important ecto-parasite and vector. In Kenya Maasailand both sleeping sickness and tsetse were insignificant at the beginning of the twentieth century. This paper examines the detailed processes which brought about the expansion of tsetse and epidemic sleeping sickness in the study area. It finds that changes in plant associations, ecosystem complexes, wildlife and human ecology enabled tsetse and trypanosomiasis to spread easily and maintain their infestation in the region. Such changes were initiated by British colonial interventions.