Though a large nation, Turkey only harbored *S. haematobium* in the southeastern provinces of Urfa and Mardin, both of which lie on the northern outskirts of the parasite's ecological range [1]. Early cases were documented in the cities of Mardin in 1934 and Akcakale, Idil, Suruc and Nusaybin in 1950, all of which are situated near each other in the southeastern region of Turkey [2]. In 1960, researchers found schistosomes in 5 of 19 individuals during a cursory search that primarily focused on livestock schistosomes. These same researchers reported a hospital in the southeast region using the molluscicide sodium pentachlorophenate to combat the *B. truncatus* host snails for disease control [3]. However, this may have been an isolated case as there was no record in the literature of widespread, coordinated molluscicide use.

Schistosomiasis considered non-endemic in Turkey, as transmission of worms is low or non-existent. >1% of people carry worms.
One notable government program in Southeast Turkey that may have contributed to the region’s resilience against schistosomiasis spread is the Southeastern Anatolia Project (SAP), which has aimed to raise living standards in the region through the construction of numerous dams and irrigation schemes since 1977 [2]. The most extensive of these is the Ataturk Dam (constructed between 1983-1992), which currently irrigates about 4760 square kilometers of land in the Urfa province. A difference between this water development project and many other irrigation projects occurring around the same time throughout the world was that the water in this scheme was largely distributed through underground water tunnels, rather than the more traditional surface canals used elsewhere, possibly reducing its impact on schistosomiasis transmission.

In Turkey, the number of people infected and at risk of infection has increased. Nonetheless, Turkey is considered non-endemic to schistosomiasis. Most of the cases in Turkey arise from people from neighboring countries bringing in the disease, and transmission of worms is low or nonexistent.

References