

WAHO biweekly malaria news roundup: Top highlights on malaria in West Africa and around the Globe

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RBM, WHO, WAHO, ECCAS and other experts review recent developments in malaria landscape



The RBM Partnership to End Malaria, through its Country/Regional Support Partner Committee (CRSPC) conducted a 4-day meeting of National Malaria Control Programme Managers (NMCP) to discuss recent developments in the malaria landscape. The meeting was held in Abuja Nigeria, from October 22 -25, 2019 and was declared open by the Nigerian Honorable Minister for Health, Dr. Osagie Ehanire. Key partners in attendance were the World Health Organization (WHO), West African

Health Organization (WAHO), and Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). The main objectives of the event were to engage NMCPs and partners to conduct a peer review of the status of implementation of national malaria programmes; to identify major implementation bottlenecks and solutions adopted, and to share best experiences and practices. During the meeting, WAHO engaged with all NMCP managers of the 15 ECOWAS Member States on the available technical support from WAHO and how they can access such support. There was also a side meeting to discuss issues around the Sahel Malaria Elimination (SaME) Initiative. Country participants received updates on the technical developments in malaria control in all West and Central African countries. Templates for Global Fund application were also reviewed at the meeting. Country representatives also used the opportunity to highlight the technical support they will require from donors and partners to implement their malaria control strategy.

Ghana First Lady applauds Sysmex Corporation, Japan for development of new malaria diagnostic tool



First Lady of Ghana, Her Excellency, Mrs Rebecca Naa Okaikor Akufo-Addo, has commended the efforts of Sysmex Corporation of Japan for their efforts in the development of new hospital and laboratory equipment for the diagnosis and treatment of malaria and other complicated diseases. She specifically noted the new diagnostic tool, Sysmex XN-30 Analyzer for its rapid, automated, and accurate detection and quantification of parasite-infected red blood cells.

Of noteworthy interest is the tool's use of fluorescence flow cytometry in the objective enumeration of red blood cells infected with *Plasmodium* species, the causal agent of malaria. Sysmex XN-30 Analyzer is able to detect *Plasmodium* infected red blood cells without interference of other abnormal indices, thus enhancing efficient monitoring of the malaria parasite load following initiation of treatment therapy. The First Lady also called for sustained collaboration between the Sysmex Corporation, the government of Ghana as well as other humanitarian and Non-Governmental Organizations in the development of modern diagnostic and curative medical equipment in health facilities across country. She also spoke on the need of making these tools accessible in deprived communities.

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Addressing malaria resistance in Nigeria through Softgel technology

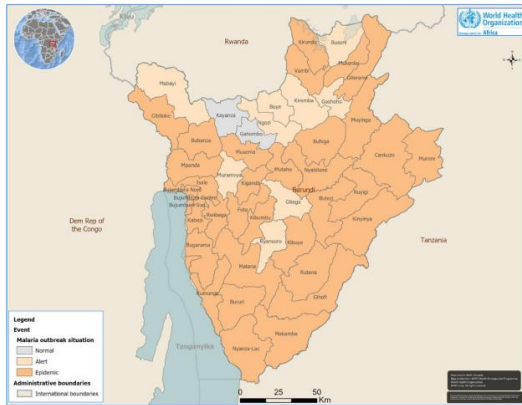


A new technology, Softgel, has emerged in addressing resistance and complications associated with the treatment of malaria. Chief Executive Officer, Geneith Pharmaceuticals, Emmanuel Umenwa, described the Softgel technology as a combination of Artemether and Lumefantrine indicated for the treatment of acute uncomplicated malaria in children and adults due to sensitive and multi-drug resistant strains of *Plasmodium falciparum*. Some of the

softgel malaria drugs available in Nigeria include Coatal-Forte Softgel a product of Geneith Pharmaceuticals Company Limited, Amatem Forte softgel by Elbe pharma. Mr. Umenwa further explained that softgel comes in variety of colors, shapes and sizes and is able to mask unpleasant odors and taste frequently associated with malaria medications, thus making it easier to swallow. Softgel also possesses fast disintegration and absorption properties and is able to readily dissolve in the gastric juices of the digestive tract. Mr. Umenwa also remarked that prompt and accurate diagnosis of malaria was essential for effective management of the diseases.

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Updates on the malaria outbreak in Burundi as more than 7 million have been affected in 2019



The World Health Organization (WHO) has reported that there is an ongoing outbreak of malaria in Burundi as more than 7 million people have now been affected by malaria this year, with nearly 140 000 cases in the last week. Between August and October 2019 more than 1,500,858 new cases including 836 deaths were recorded. Also, in the week ending October 20, 2019 alone, 136,047 new cases and 34 deaths were reported. This represented a significant increase of 64.6% when compared to the number of cases and deaths within the same period last year. The eastern region of the

country is mostly affected with a total of 14 health districts namely Butezi, Cankuzo, Gashoho, Gihofi, Gitega, Kibuye, Kinyinya, Kirundo, Mukenke, Murore, Mutaho, Nyabikere, Ruyigi and Busoni reporting a malaria prevalence of more than 90% among the tested patients since the beginning of the outbreak. There is an urgent need for additional resource mobilization to scale up the current response strategies in addressing the outbreak. Community acceptance of key vector control activities such as bed net distribution, indoor insecticide spraying and removal of potential breeding sites will also prove useful in combating the spread of the disease.

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Ethiopia becomes the 10th African country to join the *Zero Malaria Starts with Me* campaign



Ethiopia has joined nine other African countries in the *Zero Malaria Starts with Me* movement and has launched its own campaign towards malaria elimination in the country. The campaign was launched by the Deputy Prime Minister of Ethiopia in Addis Ababa. The launch was well attended by high-level dignitaries, ambassadors, representatives of the African Union Commission, President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) and the World Health Organization (WHO) among others. The *Zero Malaria Starts with Me* campaign is a Pan-African movement and was launched in July 2018 at the 31st African Union Summit. Following reports of increase in incidence of the disease for the first time in over 10 years,

the campaign seeks to revive progress efforts against malaria by engaging political leaders at all levels, mobilizing resources and empowering communities to hold their leaders accountable in the fight against malaria. According to the 2018 World Malaria Report, Ethiopia is already recording progress in the fight against malaria as evidenced by the 58% reduction of malaria related deaths since 2000. Launching a country-owned campaign is definitely a step in the right direction to sustain and increase such gains.

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