

Malaria Control

Our best investment for saving lives in Africa today

Global and national investments for malaria control have led to declines in mortality rates among children under five years of age by more than 20 percent in multiple sub-Saharan African countries in the past five years. Globally, the estimated number of people dying from malaria each year declined from nearly 1 million people in 2000 to fewer than 800,000 in 2009. US support for the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria has been critical to this success.

Malaria is a preventable and treatable disease caused by parasites that are transmitted by certain species of Anopheline mosquitoes. Malaria is the leading preventable cause of child deaths in sub-Saharan Africa, accounting for about 20 percent of all deaths in children under the age of five. Malaria is not only a public health problem, it is also a development issue. Economists estimate that malaria accounts for approximately 40 percent of public health expenditures in Africa and causes an annual loss of \$12 billion, or 1.3 percent of the continent's gross domestic product.

SCALING UP MALARIA PREVENTION INTERVENTIONS

Since 2005, many African countries have scaled up the availability and use of proven, cost-effective malaria control interventions, such as insecticide-treated mosquito nets (ITNs), indoor residual spraying of insecticides (IRS), intermittent preventive treatment during pregnancy (IPTp), and prompt and effective diagnosis and treatment of malaria illness with a new generation of highly effective drugs. Household ownership rates of ITNs have risen from below 5 percent in 2005 to over 40 percent in 2010 across the Africa region, and are now above 50 percent in many countries. The number of people protected by IRS in sub-Saharan Africa rose from 13 million in 2005 to 75 million in 2009. This increase in coverage coincides with the increased availability of financing for malaria control from approximately US\$100 million in 2003 to US\$1.8 billion in 2010.



M. Hallahan/Sumitomo Chemical-Olyset Net

DEMONSTRATING IMPACT

According to the most recent World Health Organization (WHO) report, 11 countries in Africa reported a reduction of more than 50 percent in either confirmed malaria cases or malaria admissions and deaths from 2000 to 2009. The close and consistent relationship between the national achievement of high program coverage with effective interventions and the precipitous fall in childhood death is striking.

Across malaria-endemic countries in Africa, an average of 25 to 35 percent of all outpatient clinic visits are for malaria and between 20 and 45 percent of all hospital admissions are caused by malaria. Where effective malaria control has been achieved, the result has been substantially fewer outpatient clinic visits and a dramatic reduction in hospitalizations for malaria. This "unburdening" of the health system frees up health care workers and hospital beds, creating opportunities for the health care system to function more efficiently and deal with other important health issues.

Success stories

Halting the toll of malaria in Tanzania

The Government of Tanzania is committed to high coverage with ITNs, targeted IRS, IPTp, and availability of effective medicines. As a result, the percentage of households that own at least one ITN rose from just 23 percent in 2005 to 64 percent in 2009. At the same time, death rates for children under five years of age decreased by 28 percent.

Saving lives in Bioko Island

In 2004, Bioko Island began to rapidly scale up malaria interventions and in just four years the percentage of children protected from malaria by ITNs or IRS rose from 4 percent to 95 percent. Through malaria control alone, Bioko Island reached the UN Millennium Development Goal of reducing child mortality rates by two-thirds by the year 2015 (see Figure 1).

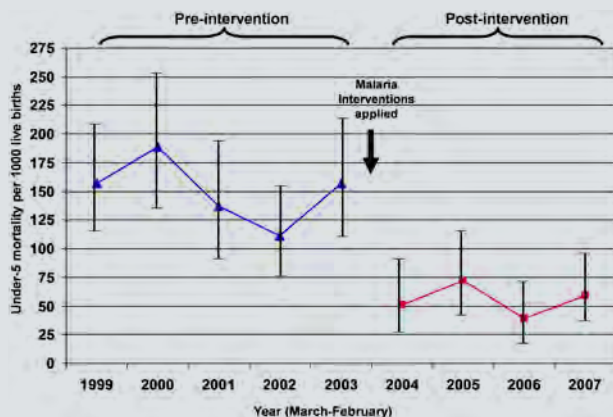


Figure 1. Rates of all-cause under-five mortality on Bioko Island, Equatorial Guinea: pre- and post-malaria control interventions (IRS, ITNs, case management).

closely with national governments, other donors, and multilateral partners, PMI collaborates with the private sector, nongovernmental organizations, and faith-based organizations.

PMI is documenting evidence, through nationwide household surveys, that its targeted efforts are contributing to substantial drops in child deaths. By removing malaria as a major public health problem, PMI's broader aim is to promote region-wide economic growth and development. Since 2005, seven of the 17 PMI focus countries have had at least two nationwide malaria surveys. Each of these countries has reported significant reductions in mortality rates in children under the age of five ranging from 23 to 36 percent—remarkable progress in just a short period of time.

PMI is a core component of the US Government's development policy and the administration's Global Health Initiative (GHI), a comprehensive, whole-of-government approach to global health. Rather than attack diseases individually, the GHI focuses on tying health programs together, creating an integrated, coordinated system of care. For example, PMI is expanding efforts to support health systems strengthening and integrate its work with maternal and child health efforts and PEPFAR, the US Government's HIV/AIDS program. Sustaining PMI funding is critical to saving lives and maintaining the gains already under way, as well as extending those gains to other countries, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, where hundreds of thousands of children are still dying of malaria needlessly each year.

The US also contributes to the Global Fund, where each dollar it invests is matched two-to-one by partners. The Global Fund provides almost 60 percent of the global funding in the fight against malaria. In addition, the United States is also a leader in advancing innovation for more cost-effective and effective control and treatment tools, including new drugs, insecticides, diagnostics, and vaccines. The US now has the chance to improve on the gains already made, by sustaining its commitment and making sure that its investments to date are not wasted.

CONTINUED US LEADERSHIP IS KEY TO SUCCESS

The United States has played a leading role in the success against malaria through PMI, the Global Fund, and other malaria programs. PMI was launched by the Bush administration in 2005 to rapidly scale up proven prevention and treatment measures in African countries with high malaria burdens. In addition to working

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PATH is an international nonprofit organization that creates sustainable, culturally relevant solutions, enabling communities worldwide to break longstanding cycles of poor health. By collaborating with diverse public- and private-sector partners, PATH helps provide appropriate health technologies and vital strategies that change the way people think and act. PATH's work improves global health and well-being.

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