

Fighting Malaria on the “River of Life”

An opportunity to join an historic, illuminating voyage



Under the political sponsorship of SADC, the RBM Zambezi Expedition – a voyage on the 2,500 km Zambezi River - will be a world's first to show the successes and the challenges faced by six malaria-endemic African countries – Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The journey will draw attention onto remote populations at the water's edge who are anxious to receive protective treated nets and malaria treatments. It will also help document the disease, highlight the success and challenges of meeting SADC countries' pledge to eradicate malaria and help make the case for this ambitious health goal.



- The Zambezi Expedition will showcase the successes in the fight against malaria and highlight the challenges to be tackled and overcome, such as education, access to effective treatment and drug resistance.
- The Zambezi expedition will highlight the plight of babies and young children, and the very high price they pay: 75% of all malaria-related deaths occur in pregnant women and children. There is no reason why so many pregnant women and children are dying of malaria, a preventable and treatable disease.
- The Zambezi Expedition illustrates the vital importance of regional cooperation and cross-border collaboration to the SADC region's long term goal of elimination. It demonstrates that success is within reach.
- The Zambezi Expedition demonstrates the need for partnerships to fight malaria. The Expedition would not have been possible without partnership.
- The Zambezi River has the potential to represent the 'River of Life' among the six countries and serve as a communications and development pathway. Instead, the high burden of malaria today creates a river environment of illness and suffering.

Country Profile - Malaria control | **BOTSWANA**



Courtesy of World Factbook

Botswana in Figures

General 2007

Population: 1.8 million (2006 update)
Life expectancy: 40 (2004 update)
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births): 56 (2006 update)
Doctors/people: 39 per 100,000 people

Malaria 2007

Reported cases: 16,983
Reported deaths: 6

Contact Information

Ms Tjantitili Mosweunyane
National Malaria Country Programme (NMCP)
Manager
Ministry of Health
Tel: +267-3-190-673
Cell: +267-71-424-134
Email:
tmosweunyane@gov.bw

Background

Malaria is a significant public health problem in Botswana with between 17,000 and 102,000 cases of unconfirmed malaria occurring each year. Malaria transmission is unstable and, hence, there is a high risk of epidemics. The burden of malaria is greatest in Boteti, Chobe, Ngami, Okavango and Tutume districts. However, outbreaks and epidemics can occur in the central region of the country following greater than normal rainfall. It is estimated that 32% of the population live in malarious areas.

Key Interventions

Malaria control efforts, principally indoor residual spraying and case management, have reduced malaria morbidity and mortality, and also likely to have reduced transmission levels. In 2004, 75,892 insecticide-treated nets were sold or distributed in Botswana. About 125,000 structures were sprayed with insecticide in 2004 and 2005 protecting 70% of the population at risk.

It should be noted that HIV/AIDS infection rates in Botswana are the second highest in the world and threaten Botswana's impressive economic and health gains. Life expectancy decreased from 65 years in 1990 to 40 years in 2004. The health sector has been affected by the exodus of nurses, doctors and other specialists to developed countries.

Economic impact

Key sectors that are particularly affected by malaria include agriculture, tourism, mining and construction industries.

Tourism is an increasingly important industry in Botswana, accounting for almost 12% of GDP (1). It is believed that malaria has hampered the development and growth of the tourism industry as the fear of contracting malaria is a major deterrent to many tourists. While serious study of the issue has not been undertaken in Botswana, a study on malaria and tourism conducted in South Africa, Swaziland and Mozambique found that malaria was perceived as the principle negative determinant on bed occupancy (2).

(1) Wikipedia

(2) http://www.malaria.org.za/lsdi/Overview/malaria_and_tourism.html

*The information in this profile was extracted from the **Botswana Roll Back Malaria Strategic Plan, 2002-2005 (dated Nov 2001)** and the **World Health Organization Regional Office for Africa website.** <http://afro.who.int/>*