FREE AFRICA FROM MALARIA now

ROLL BACK MALARIA

The Link between Malaria and HIV/AIDS

Backgrounder

Malaria and HIV/AIDS are two of the most devastating global health problems of our time, causing more than 4 million deaths a year taken together. Both malaria and HIV/AIDS are diseases of poverty, taking their greatest toll among poor populations living in developing countries. The toll both diseases take on families' health, communities' productivity and countries' economies exacerbates the vicious cycle of poverty. In addition, co-infections with malaria and HIV/AIDS have major health implications. But it doesn't have to be this way—both malaria and HIV/AIDS are treatable and preventable diseases.

Malaria and HIV/AIDS

- **are most common in the same regions:** Both diseases are concentrated in tropical and sub-tropical regions of the world, overwhelmingly affecting developing countries, particularly those in sub-Saharan Africa.
- **are diseases of poverty:** Malaria and HIV/AIDS are both causes of poverty and caused by poverty. They often affect the poorest segments of any population by keeping people out of work, causing school absenteeism among children and forcing families to divert meager incomes to treatment.
- **increase risks of infection and treatment failure:** HIV/AIDS increases the risk of infection with malaria and decreases response to standard antimalarial treatment. As a cause of anaemia, malaria frequently leads to blood transfusions, a potential risk factor for HIV infections. Malaria also contributes to increased viral load among HIV-infected people.
- **have disproportionate effects on pregnant women and children:** HIV/AIDS impairs treatment of malaria among pregnant women and dual infections increase the risk of illness, anaemia, and low birth weight during infancy. Children who have HIV/AIDS are more likely to experience severe malaria.

What you need to know about malaria

Malaria is an infection caused by a parasite and carried from person to person through the bite of female Anopheline mosquitoes. The parasites then multiply in the human liver and bloodstream causing fever and chills and can lead to death if left untreated.

Today, approximately 40% of the world's population is at risk of malaria. More than one million people die from malaria each year, with 90% of these deaths occurring in sub-Saharan Africa. The disease is found throughout the tropical and sub-tropical regions of the world and annually between 350 to 500 million people become acutely ill with malaria. Malaria takes a particularly brutal toll on pregnant women and children and is the leading cause of death among children under five years old on the African continent, killing one child every 30 seconds.

What you need to know about HIV/AIDS

AIDS is caused by infection with a virus called human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). HIV is spread by sexual contact with an infected person, by sharing needles and/or syringes (primarily for drug injection) with someone who is infected, or, less commonly (and now very rarely in countries where blood is screened for HIV antibodies), through transfusions of infected blood or blood clotting factors. Babies born to HIV-infected women may become infected before or during birth or through breast-feeding. People with HIV have what is called HIV infection. Some of these people will develop AIDS as a result of their HIV infection. Worldwide, about 40 million people are now living with HIV, of whom roughly 38 million live in low- and middle-income countries. 3 million people died of HIV/AIDS in 2005 and 5 million people were newly infected with HIV.

RBM
ROLL BACK MALARIA PARTNERSHIP

RBM Partnership Secretariat hosted by WHO
• 20, Avenue Appia, CH-1211 • Geneva 27 Switzerland
• Tel.: +41 22 791 3920 • Fax: +41 22 791 1587
• E-mail: inforbm@who.int • www.rollbackmalaria.org

now FREE AFRICA FROM MALARIA

ROLL BACK MALARIA

- **Malaria is preventable**
  Two key interventions can turn the tide against malaria: the use of long-lasting insecticide treated nets (LLINs) to protect persons at risk from mosquitoes and, well-targeted indoor residual spraying (IRS) to control transmission by mosquitoes. Both interventions can be effective in different circumstances and strategies must reflect local needs—there is no "one size fits all" approach to malaria control.
- **Malaria is treatable**
  Malaria can be treated, even in people living with HIV/AIDS. Artemisinin-based Combinations Therapies (ACT) are the most effective antimalarial treatment today—they are nearly 95% effective in curing malaria. In many parts of the world, resistance has developed to older forms of treatment—for this reason, it is critical that ACT use be scaled up.
- **HIV/AIDS is preventable**
  Anyone can get HIV. To avoid infection it is critical to understand how the virus is transmitted. Unprotected sex, drug use and needle sharing must be avoided as part of an individuals own prevention strategy. Programmatic HIV prevention strategies include monitoring the epidemic to target prevention, care activities, measuring the effectiveness of prevention methods and funding the implementation and evaluation of prevention efforts in high-risk communities, encouraging early diagnosis of HIV infection, and fostering linkages between prevention and treatment programs.
- **HIV/AIDS is treatable...but not yet curable**
  Although HIV is a very serious infection, many people with HIV and AIDS are living longer, healthier lives today, thanks to new and effective treatments. Standard antiretroviral therapy (ART) consists of the use of at least three antiretroviral (ARV) drugs to maximally suppress the HIV virus and stop the progression of HIV disease. Treating HIV AIDS requires a life -time commitment to current therapies until a cure is found. Huge reductions have been seen in rates of death and suffering when use is made of a potent ARV regimen.

RBM Partnership Secretariat hosted by WHO
20, Avenue Appia, CH-1211 • Geneva 27 Switzerland •
Tel.: +41 22 791 3920 • Fax: +41 22 791 1587 •
E-mail: inforbm@who.int • www.rollbackmalaria.org •

RBM
ROLL BACK MALARIA PARTNERSHIP