

Malaria Reports, a new journal

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International funding for malaria control has raised significantly in the past decade, leading to large-scale indoor residual spraying campaigns, to the distribution of insecticide-treated bed nets, and to the introduction of artemisinin-based combination treatments. An encouraging reduction of malaria cases has been reported in a number of countries, but malaria remains a major public health problem worldwide (WHO, 2010). People living in the poorest countries are the most vulnerable. Therefore, it remains a challenge to ensure that high levels of coverage and caution are maintained and that efforts aimed at developing an effective and affordable vaccine would be amplified.

Malaria Reports is a journal about evidence for policy makers. Policy makers require clear and useful messages, assisting them in their decisions. *Malaria Reports* would like to provide such information while ensuring that the methodology (e.g., analytical) used to obtain the results is rigorous and sound. By following a line of analytical correctness in the responses to explicit questions of policy makers, scientists can team up their work with policy action.

Malaria Reports has the most prominent aim to contribute to the existing and ongoing malaria burden quantification efforts, keeping a finger on the pulse of scientists, donors and policy makers. Medical studies are often conducted without knowing the importance of a health problem. It has been reported that about half of the world's population is at risk of malaria with annually nearly one million deaths (WHO, 2010) and with a global burden of malaria exceeding 40 million disability-adjusted life years (Lopez *et al.*, 2006). However, malaria incidence and prevalence estimations are often based on reports, with low levels of diagnostic accuracy, especially in situations of low endemicity. In order to effectively plan, monitor the impact of interventions and assess progress towards the international malaria goals at a local and global scale, malar-

ia control programs need good epidemiological and more-credible information about the burden of Malaria (Attaran 2005). Without credible, comprehensible and comparable evidence on malaria, the success or failure of any intervention will remain unclear. A good assessment of the risks and of the economic and non-economic consequences of a problem is especially required in resource-poor settings. We would welcome papers contributing to the knowledge base, preferably adding to global data collection efforts. In line with this, we would appreciate reports on the development and application of new diagnostic tools, leading to better malaria burden estimations.

Malaria Reports will also be a forum to discuss the current understanding of and new insights about the interplay between malaria and its determinants. We would like to value papers having relevance across a range of settings and address and assess the importance of biological, environmental, social, socio-economic, behavioral and political determinants of malaria. There has now been a recent and radical shift from control to elimination with eventually eradication as a goal. The move from low prevalence to no transmission, first proposed by the Melinda and Bill Gates Foundation in 2007, will require innovative data collection efforts, as well as methodological tools to entangle the existing malaria related complexity. In line with this and serving a less ambitious and intermediate goal, we intend to especially approve papers providing evidence on how the currently and possibly new available interventions can reduce malaria from a major to a minor health problem. Papers reporting on how to deal with the potential spread of artemisinin-resistance, as well as to the rising resistance of malaria vectors to insecticides meet our objectives. Moreover, we would welcome papers that articulate the integration of knowledge allowing science to be translated into policy and practice.

Our journal also seeks papers reporting on existing surveillance and monitoring systems, assessing how routine surveillance systems can be strengthened. Evidence of an increase in malaria cases in Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, and Zambia in 2009 (WHO, 2010) highlights the fragility of malaria control and the need to maintain a rigorous monitoring of

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disease surveillance data, both nationally and subnationally. *Malaria Reports* wants to support the analysis and the development of cost-effective routine data collection systems.

The highlighted potential topics do not close the door to other interesting manuscripts. We would in first instance accept papers on all aspects of malaria hereby promoting research for malaria. Indeed, submissions to *Malaria Reports* will be peer-reviewed but all papers that are judged to be methodologically correct and technically sound will have a good chance to be published. We ensure that all the submissions will be reviewed rapidly, guaranteeing a fast publication schedule, and published immediately upon acceptance (i.e., through the open access philosophy). Papers will be made accessible free-of-charge, making the published work easily available to a wide public. Welcome to *Malaria Reports*!

References

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