Update on Malaria in Southern Africa

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Short Note

Malaria is a eukaryotic plasmodium disease spread by the female Anopheles mosquito.

Typically the malaria parasites invade the red blood cells.

This results in fever, headache and can result in coma leading to death.

Falciparum is the dangerous form of malaria leading to the most fatalities.

Classically the red cells show ring forms and banana shaped gametocytes are seen in the peripheral blood.

Fundamental to the understanding of malaria is an understanding of the life cycle of the malaria parasite in the mosquito and the human host and the sexual and asexual forms of the parasite.

Malaria kills over 1 million people each year, most of whom are young children, under 5 years., 95 % of whom live in sub-Saharan Africa. Each year three are over 300 million cases of malaria. Malaria is responsible for 1 out of 4 deaths in children each year in Africa.

Women are 4 times more likely to get sick and twice as likely to die if they are pregnant.

Malaria affected families are able to harvest only 40% of there crops.

The direct and indirect costs of malaria in Africa are estimated to be 2 billion dollars per year.

Malaria slows economic growth by 1.3% per year.

There is more and more chloroquin resistance and DDT is not as effective as it used to be. Sporozoites are found in the liver stage and gametocytes form as do ookinetes in the salivary glands of the mosquito. These are injected into the human host.

Diagnosis is made under the microscope but there is a rapid fixation test.

Artemesin has come to the fore as a form of treatment. Originally from China but effective as prophylaxis and treatment.