

Vaccination for Malaria Control

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Letter

Malaria has been one among the world's deadliest diseases. It kills more than 4, 00,000 people a year worldwide and causes illness in millions of others.

In the past two decades, existing interventions have reduced the malaria burden. And India, too, has made good progress in malaria control. The disease burden has declined by 59%. The fight against the disease got another shot in the arm when the world's first malarial vaccine got launched in Malawi.

A large scale pilot project, which has been called the world's first malaria vaccine, to give partial protection to children has begun in Malawi. The vaccine called RTS, S are going to be available to everyone under the age of two. After the rollout in Malawi, vaccination will begin in Ghana and Kenya. Approximately, 3, 60,000 children will get the vaccine annually. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the effort could immunize more than one million children by the year 2023.

Malaria Vaccine: Known by its lab initials as RTS, S but branded as Mosquirix, the vaccine has passed lengthy scientific trials that found it to be safe and reducing the risk of malaria by nearly 40%, the simplest ever recorded.

It was developed by GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) Company and approved by the Eco Medicines Agency in 2015. The RTS, S vaccine trains the immune system to attack the malaria parasite (*Plasmodium (P.) falciparum*, the most deadly species of the malaria parasite) which is spread by mosquito bites. This vaccine took 30 years to be developed. The efficiency of the RTS, S vaccine was established during a phase 3 clinical test that concluded in 2014. The vaccine only prevents four in ten malarial cases and must be given as four injections over 18 months.

WHO wants the vaccine to be used alongside other preventive measures such as treated bed nets, insecticides, repellents and anti-malarial drugs?. Malawi is first of the three countries chosen for the pilot program to roll out the vaccine. Soon, Ghana and Kenya will take part as a part of an outsized scale

pilot program backed by the WHO. These three countries were selected for the rollout because their malaria rates are high. The vaccine is not registered in India. Before registration, the trial is must. Also, so far, no vaccine has been tried in India against Malaria.

World Malaria Report, 2018, 70% of malaria cases in the world is concentrated in India and 10 African countries. The ten African countries reported an increase in cases of malaria in 2017 compared to 2016. Nigeria, Madagascar and therefore the Democratic Republic of the Congo showed the very best rise. In contrast, India reported 30 lakh fewer cases in the same period.

Children aged less than 5 years accounted for 61% of all malaria deaths worldwide. The highest number of deaths- 19% was recorded in Nigeria. Expenditure on Malaria has remained more or less stable since 2010. In 2017, like the previous years, America was the largest international source of malaria financing contributing 120 core dollars.

In 2015, it was decided by the World Health Assembly that by 2030, malaria has to be completely eliminated in at least 35 countries. In order to achieve this goal, annual expenditure on programmers related to malaria must be increased by 660 core dollars by 2020.

Globally, the scope of malaria eradication has increased. There were no cases of malaria in China and El Salvador in 2017. WHO declared Paraguay a malaria free country in 2018? Algeria, Argentina and Uzbekistan have requested the WHO to declare them malaria free.

Malaria Cases in India: With 9.5 million malaria cases, India reported almost 3 million fewer malaria cases in 2017 or a 24% decrease over the previous year. India's reduction- the sharpest within a year, means the country accounts for just 4% of the world's total malaria cases and is not any longer among the world's top three countries in terms of number of cases.

Nearly half all malaria cases were reported from Odessa, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and parts of West Bengal which have a sizeable tribal population living within the remote rural areas.

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