The pandemic focus threatens precarious progress

Coronavirus could set back the fight against malaria by 20 years, with Africa hit worst, writes Andrew Jack

Combating Malaria

Pandemic fears threaten to set back the fight against malaria by 20 years, with Africa hit worst, according to a new report in the Financial Times.

The report, "Pandemic Focus Threatens Precarious Progress on Combating Malaria," warns that the coronavirus outbreak could set back the fight against malaria by 20 years, with Africa hit worst. The report points out that the pandemic is threatening the progress made in the fight against malaria, which has already seen significant gains in recent years.

The report notes that the pandemic is causing widespread social and economic disruption, which is likely to have led to an increase in malaria deaths. It also points out that the pandemic is likely to have caused a drop in the number of people who are able to access healthcare and malaria treatments.

The report estimates that the pandemic is likely to have led to an extra 5,600 malaria deaths, compared with 2,543 from Ebola. It also notes that the pandemic is likely to have caused a reduction in the number of malaria cases, which is already disrupting health systems in Africa.

The report calls for increased funding for malaria programmes, saying that "failing to scale up efforts on malaria is to cut off the lifelines."

The report also highlights the importance of digital technology in the fight against malaria, noting that "digital tools can play a role in the battle against coronavirus — although most specialists are sceptical in the absence of rigorous, large-scale clinical trials. There are also concerns about the risk of shortages for malaria treatments."
India’s Covid-19 lockdown hit malaria
life-saving trials

Prevention Outreach delays programme amid fears of a drug ‘hijack’, reports Stephanie Fielding

The world has achieved great progress against malaria over the last two decades, saving 600,000 lives and preventing 10 million cases every year.

COVID-19 threatens that progress. If people at risk of malaria do not receive critical prevention tools, such as effective long-lasting insecticidal nets (LLINs), that are currently available, malaria cases could go undiagnosed and untreated, leading to a surge in malaria deaths.

This World Malaria Day 2020, we commend our partners the WHO, RBM Partnership to End Malaria, The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, President’s Malaria Initiative, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in championing LMICs and improving health workers on the frontlines.

We ask leaders and the global community to continue the safe and rapid distribution of life-saving LLINs, reducing the burden on our health systems and strengthening the resilience to challenges such as COVID-19.

©EzeroMalariaStartWithMe and each of us has a role to play.

We can successfully fight multiple diseases simultaneously - and to save lives, we must.

Vestergaard and the United Nations Foundation’s Nothing But Nets campaign have joined forces to #EndMalaria. For more information on how you can join us, contact info@nothingbutnets.net