



MALARIA

A manual for community health workers



World Health Organization
Geneva

MALARIA
**A manual for community
health workers**



World Health Organization
Geneva
1996

WHO Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
Malaria: a manual for community health workers.

1.Malaria 2.Community health aides 3.~~Manuals~~

ISBN 92 4 154491 0 (NLM Classification: WC 750)

The World Health Organization welcomes requests for permission to reproduce or translate its publications, in part or in full. Applications and enquiries should be addressed to the Office of Publications, World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland, which will be glad to provide the latest information on any changes made to the text, plans for new editions, and reprints and translations already available.

© World Health Organization 1996

Publications of the World Health Organization enjoy copyright protection in accordance with the provisions of Protocol 2 of the Universal Copyright Convention. All rights reserved.

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the World Health Organization concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

The mention of specific companies or of specific manufacturers' products does not imply that they are endorsed or recommended by the World Health Organization in preference to others of a similar nature that are not mentioned. Errors and omissions excepted, the names of proprietary products are distinguished by initial capital letters.

TYPESET IN HONG KONG
PRINTED IN ENGLAND

95/10714—Best-set/Clays—8000

Photograph: P. Merchez

The World Health Organization was established in 1948 as a specialized agency of the United Nations serving as the directing and coordinating authority for international health matters and public health. One of WHO's constitutional functions is to provide objective and reliable information and advice in the field of human health, a responsibility that it fulfils in part through its extensive programme of publications.

The Organization seeks through its publications to support national health strategies and address the most pressing public health concerns of populations around the world. To respond to the needs of Member States at all levels of development, WHO publishes practical manuals, handbooks and training material for specific categories of health workers; internationally applicable guidelines and standards; reviews and analyses of health policies, programmes and research; and state-of-the-art consensus reports that offer technical advice and recommendations for decision-makers. These books are closely tied to the Organization's priority activities, encompassing disease prevention and control, the development of equitable health systems based on primary health care, and health promotion for individuals and communities. Progress towards better health for all also demands the global dissemination and exchange of information that draws on the knowledge and experience of all WHO's Member countries and the collaboration of world leaders in public health and the biomedical sciences.

To ensure the widest possible availability of authoritative information and guidance on health matters, WHO secures the broad international distribution of its publications and encourages their translation and adaptation. By helping to promote and protect health and prevent and control disease throughout the world, WHO's books contribute to achieving the Organization's principal objective – the attainment by all people of the highest possible level of health.

As a community health worker you can help your village, your family, and yourself to control malaria:

- **Prompt treatment of malaria saves lives**
- **Prompt treatment of malaria reduces the duration of disease and its harmful effects on the human body**
- **Preventive measures in the community reduce the risk of people getting malaria**

Preface

This manual has been prepared by Dr R. L. Kouznetsov, Malaria Control, in collaboration with Dr P. F. Beales, Chief, Training, Division of Control of Tropical Diseases, World Health Organization, for the training of community health workers in malaria control. It may also be used by community health workers to support their day-to-day work.

The manual contains the basic information and guidance required for the recognition of malaria, its treatment, and identification of cases to be referred; recording and reporting; promotion of community awareness about malaria; and promotion of relevant and feasible preventive activities.

It is emphasized that this manual should serve as a basis for local adaptation, since the epidemiological, social, and economic conditions—as well as health care delivery systems and approaches to malaria treatment and control—vary considerably from country to country and even within each country. Enquiries regarding adaptation are welcomed, and should be addressed in the first instance to the Office of Publications, World Health Organization, 1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland. The text is available from WHO on computer diskette to make adaptation easier.

Staff of national malaria control programmes should note the following:

- It is normally the responsibility of national malaria control programmes to define the first-line treatment for uncomplicated malaria to be used by community health workers. This manual has been written with chloroquine as the first-line treatment. Where chloroquine is not the first-line treatment, the manual must be modified accordingly.
- On page 27 the community health worker is advised to ask his or her supervisor about whether malaria is common in the area. Thus, for optimal use of this manual, community health worker supervisors must be informed as to whether their area is classed as one of high or low malaria risk. In

countries where malaria is highly endemic, it is safe to assume that malaria is common in the community health worker's area.

Comments and suggestions arising from the practical use of this manual would be greatly appreciated, and should be addressed to Training, Division of Control of Tropical Diseases, World Health Organization, 1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland.

Acknowledgements

The Malaria Division, Ministry of Health and Medical Services, Solomon Islands, allowed extensive use of their national guidelines for primary health workers. The World Health Organization gratefully acknowledges the role of this valuable partnership in the preparation of this manual. The authors also wish to thank the staff of the Malaria Control and Training units of WHO's Division of Control of Tropical Diseases, for their constructive criticism and encouragement during the preparation phase; particular thanks are owed to Dr A. Shapira for his valuable contributions and to the WHO Regional Offices.

Contents

	Page
Preface	vii
Acknowledgements	ix
Part 1 Introduction	1
What you can do about malaria	3
Medicines and equipment you will need	5
Part 2 General information about malaria and its prevention	7
What are the effects of malaria?	9
How do people get malaria?	10
How do malaria mosquitos live?	12
How can you prevent malaria?	13
Part 3 Recognition and treatment of malaria	21
Clinical features of malaria	23
How to recognize malaria	24
How to give standard malaria treatment	30
What to do if standard malaria treatment fails	37
Severe malaria	38
Special groups, special care	39
Recording and reporting	41
Annex 1 How to organize your antimalaria work	43
Annex 2 How to organize your village	45

Part 1

Introduction

What you can do about malaria

Malaria is one of the most serious diseases to affect people in developing countries with tropical and subtropical climates. It is particularly dangerous for young children and for pregnant women and their unborn children, although others may be seriously affected in some circumstances.

Malaria is a curable and preventable disease, but it still kills many people. The main reasons for this unsatisfactory situation are:

- Some people do not come for treatment until they are very ill because:
 - they do not realize they might have malaria (people often think they have a cold, influenza or other common infection);
 - they do not realize that malaria is very dangerous; or
 - they live far away from health care facilities.
- People living far from health services will often go to local medicine vendors (sellers) for advice, which is not always appropriate, or to buy medicines, which are not always effective.
- Many people do not know what causes malaria or how it is spread, so they are not able to protect themselves from the disease.

As a community health worker you can improve the situation by performing the following activities:

- Encourage people to seek treatment *immediately* if they have fever. This is especially important in young children and pregnant women, who should receive treatment against malaria within 24 hours of becoming ill.
- Recognize and treat malaria to prevent severe illness and death.
- Explain how to take treatment correctly, so that people can avoid repeated attacks of malaria.
- Advise patients who do not improve within 48 hours after starting treatment, or whose condition is serious, to go

immediately to the nearest hospital or clinic capable of making a definite diagnosis and managing severe disease.

- Advise individuals and families on how to protect themselves from mosquito bites.
- Motivate the community to carry out mosquito control measures in order to reduce the number of malaria cases.

All of these activities are explained in this manual.

Remember:

Prompt treatment of malaria saves lives

Prompt treatment of malaria reduces the duration of disease and its harmful effects on the human body

Preventive measures in the community reduce the risk of people getting malaria

Medicines and equipment you will need

You should have the following items in your medical kit:

- Antimalarial drug(s)*
- Paracetamol or acetylsalicylic acid (aspirin)
- Treatment schedule
- Pencils and paper
- A day-book and a monthly report form
- Malaria health education materials
- A copy of this book

It is your responsibility to have enough drugs at all times because the community will come to rely on you for treatment and advice. Always use up older medicines before you start using any new supplies.

Drugs should be kept indoors away from sunlight and heat, preferably in a locked box or cupboard, out of children's reach. Remember, **it is very dangerous to swallow large quantities of antimalaria drugs** at the same time.

*Your government's Ministry of Health should specify which antimalarial drug(s) may be used by community health workers and how they should be given—ask your supervisor.

Part 2

General information about malaria and its prevention

