

Community effectiveness of malaria treatment in Uganda—a long way to Abuja targets

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Abstract

Introduction: At the Roll Back Malaria summit for African countries in Abuja, the heads of state committed to ensure that by the year 2005 at least 60% of those suffering from malaria would have access to effective treatment within 24 hours of onset of symptoms.

Aim: The aim of the study was to assess community effectiveness of malaria treatment in children.

Method: A community-based survey of 500 households was undertaken in western Uganda.

Results: A total of 260 (52%) children were reported to have had fever within the previous 2 weeks: 87% received some kind of treatment, 44% were said to have been treated within 24 hours of onset of symptoms, 47% received appropriate anti-malarials, 25% received the correct dosage, and 24% took the drug for the recommended period of time; altogether, only 7% received all the treatment steps.

Conclusion: With drug efficacies of 50–90%, we estimate a community effectiveness of 4–6%, which is far from the 2005 Abuja target. The greatest need for improvement in the Home Based Fever Management strategy is in reducing delay in treatment and improving dosage and duration of treatment.