

World Malaria Report highlights importance of country-led efforts to defeat malaria in highest burden countries

MMV committed to working with partners to increase access to new malaria medicines in high-burden countries today and developing simpler, more effective next-generation medicines to accelerate progress tomorrow

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Geneva, Switzerland, 19 November 2018. Today, alongside the launch of the WHO World Malaria Report 2018 and a new WHO ‘High Burden High Impact Response’, MMV pledges its support to this country-led approach by developing and delivering new innovative antimalarial medicines for vulnerable populations.

Since 2000, global partnership efforts have helped reduce deaths from malaria by more than 60%. Last year’s World Malaria Report highlighted a levelling-off in the pace of progress in reducing malaria infections and deaths, with WHO describing the situation as a “cross-roads” in the fight against malaria.

This year's report further underscores the challenges of addressing malaria, particularly in high burden countries, with an estimated 219 million cases and 435,000 malaria-related deaths in 2017. The latest report also points to a transition from the "cross-roads" to a path of intensified action, resulting in progress in around half of the malaria-endemic countries, including several high-burden countries. Notably, India, a high-burden country, registered a 24% decrease in disease burden in 2017 compared to 2016. Furthermore, 46 countries that were malaria-endemic in 2000, reported less than 10,000 cases in 2017, with 26 of these reporting less than 100 cases.

Building on these signs of progress, the latest report details a new "High Burden to High Impact Response" aimed to further accelerate much-needed progress against malaria, with a focus on 11 countries (10 on the African continent, plus India) that account for approximately 70% of the global malaria burden. Catalyzed by WHO and the RBM Partnership to End Malaria, the new response will be driven by countries.

"The latest World Malaria Report highlights what can be achieved, as an increasing number of countries head towards elimination, while underscoring the challenges that remain in countries where malaria has its strongest foothold," said Dr David Reddy, MMV's CEO. "With our partners, we have brought forward nine new medicines estimated to have saved 1.5 million lives to date. One of our roles is to continue the effort to further increase access to those treatments. In parallel, we are developing more effective and simpler medicines, to deepen impact, particularly in high-burden areas where the fight against malaria is most complex and challenging."

Two MMV-supported medicines, approved last year, were rectal artesunate suppository products. These products help buy time for vulnerable children with severe malaria living in rural communities to get to health care facilities where they can be administered WHO-recommended treatment, injectable artesunate. A recent pilot study in Zambia led by Transaid, MMV and partners increased access to rectal and injectable artesunate while providing bicycle ambulances and reported an impressive 96% reduction in [severe malaria case fatality](#). Results like these highlight the need to scale-up similar initiatives that will take us a step closer to providing access to medicines for all.

2018 also saw the approval, by both the [US FDA](#) and the [Australian TGA](#), of the first new medicine for relapsing malaria in more than 60 years, *Krintafel/Kozenis** (tafenoquine). The medicine, developed by GSK and MMV, is taken in a single dose in contrast to the current 7–14 day regimen of primaquine. The *P. vivax* parasite causes relapsing malaria and was reported to account for 74% of malaria cases in the WHO Region of the Americas and 37% in the WHO Region of Southeast Asia. *Krintafel/Kozenis* has the potential to help these regions as they strive towards malaria elimination. The focus is now on working to ensure the medicine reaches the vulnerable patients that need it most.

"MMV recognizes the critical unmet medical needs of malaria patients in the highest burden countries highlighted in the World Malaria Report 2018," continued Dr David Reddy. "Our portfolio of next-generation medicines to meet these needs is robust and growing stronger. Both our available and in-development medicines hold much promise to support country-led efforts to defeat malaria today and tomorrow."