

THE MALARIA SITUATION IN BRIEF

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Current malaria situation:

Malaria has been significantly reduced in the whole country with the exception of some foci in the Southern provinces of Laos. The table below summarizes the trend of malaria.

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Malaria cases	274,911	53,808	30,346	25,196	17,731
Malaria deaths	187	105	77	21	14
Hospitalization	18,377	10,154	6,853	4,753	3,445
Pop. at risk	3.6 Mio				

Organization and structure:

The NMCP is a semi-integrated vertical system, ie: at both the central and provincial level (CMPE and PAMS) it is vertical but integrated at the district (DAMN) and lower level, because of the limited number of resources. Unofficially there are 3 regional centres in the whole country: one in Louang Prabang, one in Vientiane (CMPE) and one in Savannakhet. In the near future they will play an important role in regional training centre, QA of microscopy and logistics.

Malaria diagnosis and treatment:

For uncomplicated malaria Coartem (Artemether+Lumefantrine) is the 1st choice of therapy. For severe malaria artesunate injectable is given. For referral of severe malaria at the peripheral level artesunate suppositories is recommended.

For the malaria diagnosis where there is a trained microscopist both RDT and microscopy are used at the health centre and village health volunteer only RDT is used.

Vector control:

Two types of nets have been applied : Insecticide Treated Nets (ITN) and Long Lasting Treated Net (LLTN), the former have been used since the last 20 years, the latter is replacing the former one and gradually expanded to all provinces. The actual ITN coverage is 974,753 nets treated and re-treated with an average of 2.5 persons per net and 2.7 Mio. of people are protected.

M&E:

Under the GFATM there is an M&E unit at the PR office in charge of the 3 diseases components, at the centre level similar structure also exists. They report on some impact and progress indicators to the GF. The workshop on national M&E were completed and a draft guide on national M&E is being finalized.

Public Private Partnership

Very recently CMPE has organized under the technical support of WHO 2 advocacy workshops to involve private sectors in malaria diagnosis and treatment. Now several task forces were established to review existing policies and find solutions on the PPP.

Review of strategies and policies

In 2008 and 2009 Laos is planning to initiate a malaria re-stratification of all areas, including provinces, districts and villages. Once accomplished, the NMCP will come up with new policies and recommendations for the malaria control in Laos.

Although malaria control in Laos has achieved a great progress in term of reduction of malaria mortality and morbidity, however tremendous efforts, such as human resources and other resources are needed to make the programme sustainable. A key element within the NMCP which needs attention is to increase of capacity of health staffs at all level. Both a short and long term plan needs to be the objective of the NMCP with courses both related to technical aspects as well as administrative/management. This would be very important for the country to catch up the trend already achieved by other countries. Several operational studies are still needed to elucidate questions encountered during the implementation of malaria control activities in areas like understanding the social sciences of the malaria in Laos as well as the health economic aspects of the vertical programme versus the integrated system etc. Therefore, more cooperation and collaboration providing strong scientific evidence is still needed for the NMCP to move forward.