

The Medicines for Malaria Venture

Discovering developing and delivering new and affordable medicines for this deadly disease

Medical science has made some dramatic breakthroughs in recent decades, which have the potential to reduce the global burden of death and disability from a wide variety of diseases. However, realizing this potential has, up to now, largely been restricted to diseases that can provide financial returns to companies willing to take on the costs of discovering and developing new treatments. Although market mechanisms generally work well to drive medical innovation, they can leave some global diseases of the poor, such as malaria, neglected.



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Malaria remains endemic in more than 90 countries, principally in the developing world, with between 300 and 500 million new infections each year and 2.4 billion people vulnerable to infection. As well as causing more than one million deaths every year, mainly in children and pregnant women, morbidity associated with malaria also worsens poverty in affected countries, and those people who cannot afford \$30 or so for the most effective medicines will be regularly incapacitated with bouts of malaria fever. The cycle of ill health and poverty, and the compounding lack of market incentive for R&D, has been documented exhaustively in a recent report by the World Health Organization Commission on Macroeconomics and Health.¹

The need for affordable treatments

One of the key challenges in the fight against malaria (or any disease that affects the developing world) is not just to develop effective and safe treatments, but also to make sure they are available to local governments and people at a price that will allow widespread use. New anti-malarials are also needed because resistance has rapidly been building up against existing treatments.

The mission of the Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV) is to renew and sustain the supply of affordable anti-malarials

through the discovery, development and delivery of effective new treatments for poor countries.

Public-private partnerships

In delivering its mission, MMV is using a fundamentally new approach to anti-malarial drug discovery and development, bringing the public and private sectors together to work on its projects.

Since its formation, MMV has forged a unique series of collaborations with pharmaceutical companies, non-governmental organizations, philanthropic organizations and academic institutions. MMV's portfolio is constantly growing and includes a wide range of projects to address the various medical needs in the treatment of malaria. We are delighted that four projects in our current portfolio are being carried out in partnership with GlaxoSmithKline, our co-sponsors in this Nature Insight.

For as long as malaria remains a public health problem, MMV will continue to bring different groups together to discover, develop and deliver effective and affordable drugs wherever they are needed most.

1. The Commission on Macroeconomics and Health. Macroeconomics and health: investing in health for economic development (World Health Organization, Geneva, 2001).

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Discover, Develop, Deliver



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