

Chapter 5

DIAGNOSIS AND MANAGEMENT OF MALARIA

In endemic areas, small children and pregnant women are especially vulnerable to malaria morbidity and related mortality. Small children have not yet developed adequate immunity, while pregnancy leads to a reduction in immunity. These two groups are therefore often targeted for public health interventions. Baseline research on malaria often includes investigations concerned with these two groups, to assist in designing appropriate interventions. This section of the manual concentrates specifically on the diagnosis and management of malaria in infants, small children and pregnant women.

5.1 Collecting data from institutions

5.1.1 Introduction

It is useful to collect data from the health institutions which are used by women and children in the community being studied. Keep in mind that not all people use their local health facility. Depending on their opinion of the value of the service provided, community members may decide to use or not use it. In addition to collecting data from the institutions which are supposed to serve the community therefore, you should find out what other institutions people use, visit them, and collect any relevant data from there also. Clinics may collect routine data related to maternal or child health status, prescription of anti-malarials, cases of fever, and so on. If such information is not collected routinely, you can gather an impression of women and children's health by interviewing clinic staff.

In analysing such data, remember that women and children attending clinics are not necessarily representative of the community as a whole, and that you cannot necessarily extrapolate from these populations to the community in general.

5.1.2 Collecting data from clinic cards

If records are available from clinics, you may wish to collate this information. This data might be useful, for example, to identify why women use antenatal services: for fever for example, or because they are pregnant. Women might be prescribed a number of drugs including antimalarials such as chloroquine, and it could be useful then to do follow-up interviews with them regarding their compliance in taking prescribed medication.

You might take all women currently registered with the antenatal clinic or all women pregnant over the past year. From antenatal clinic cards, you should be able to collect some background information to help you focus your research or to indicate areas to follow up. You need to collect the names and numbers of women currently pregnant (registered with antenatal clinic), or those pregnant over the past year. You might use a record sheet, like the one included as **RESEARCH TOOL 5.1**, to