

The Malaria Network web site

<http://www.malariainetwork.org>

A joint collaboration between the World Health Organization and the World Bank, maintained by the Department of Communicable Disease Prevention and Control, World Health Organization, Geneva.

The Malaria Network web site has been established by the World Health Organization (WHO) in collaboration with the World Bank to meet the needs of programme managers and senior health officers with specific responsibilities for implementation of malaria control. The principal objectives of the network are to facilitate the exchange of technical and managerial information and experiences relevant to the control of malaria.

The site consists of two main sections: a general section that can be accessed freely and a restricted-access area for which participants need a user name and password provided by the web site administrator. The password-protected pages include restricted malaria-related documents and a discussion forum for malaria control programme managers and other experts to discuss specific operational issues. The following information is available from the free access area:

- details on operational issues for malaria prevention and control;
- WHO publications and documents on malaria;
- news relevant to malaria-related issues (press releases, fact sheets, and epidemiological information);
- links to major malaria-related web sites and other sites relevant to malaria prevention and control;
- lists of upcoming conferences and seminars.

The Malaria Network web site has been designed to be simple, clear and attractive to users, and the use of many colours and complicated designs has been avoided. A search facility has been included to permit easy access to available material.

Most countries where malaria is endemic are developing countries. The Malaria Network web site is mainly dedicated to these countries, with concerted efforts being made to facilitate the control programmes

already in progress. The network is updated daily by a site moderator on the basis of advice obtained from experts affiliated to WHO. The site moderator also mediates the discussion forum, which provides a wider opportunity for users to post their contributions, questions, and also to read malaria-related contributions from a wide range of sources.

Although access to the Internet and other electronic media is increasing rapidly, malaria control programme managers and health officers from many developing countries are unable to benefit from the Malaria Network because of lack of facilities. Even for those with access to the Internet, the associated costs prevent regular use. In recognition of these problems, WHO and the World Bank are giving financial support to more than 20 African countries where malaria is endemic to cover the purchase of modems, installation costs and Internet-service fees for one year. The project is being expanded to include other countries where malaria is endemic. This should greatly enhance the coordinated distribution of essential information on malaria to the countries that need it most. ■

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