

Malaria Training Centre

G Malenga

The **Malaria Training Centre** is part of a collaborative effort in malaria research and training between the College of Medicine and Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM). Funding for a period of 5 years has been secured through the Gates Malaria Programme (GMP) of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) which also covers three other African colleges and research institutions in Ghana, Tanzania and The Gambia. Other funding sources will be sought to ensure sustainability beyond the five year period.

The College of Medicine intends to work with the National Malaria Control Programme (NMCP) in meeting training needs identified through the Roll Back Malaria (RBM) situation analysis for Malawi. Although most of the training activities will make use of existing structures, plans are underway to construct the training Centre, with library and seminar room facilities and an IT Centre for distance learning. The initiative is seen as a positive step at a time when the College is in the process of developing its post-graduate programme.

The main objective of the Centre is to build capacity by providing training in knowledge and skills required for malaria prevention, management and control, and in research methodology that can be applied to malaria control. The Centre therefore aims to work with communities as well as health workers in order to contribute to evidence based malaria policy implementation through dissemination of research results. Traditional and non-traditional training methods will be used in order to ensure wider knowledge cover, and this is in line with the college's objective of serving the community.

Some of the immediate training and research plans for the Centre include: -

- Community based **demographic data collection** and management for malaria, a pilot study in Mwanza district.
- Antimalarial drug access** at community level, an assessment of the capacity of Drug Revolving Fund (DRF) structures in Mpemba area of Blantyre District.
- Management of cases** of severe malaria at Ntcheu District Hospital where laboratory diagnostic services have been streamlined under the Essential Medical Laboratory Services (EMLS) Project. This activity will also be supported by CDC, through the University of North Carolina.

The Centre has accepted a request from WHO AFRO to conduct **regional training in case management** for severe malaria in the SADC region. It is also looking at the possibility of conducting a modular **training programme for entomology assistants**. Malawi lacks expertise in the area of medical entomology although this field is crucial in analysing mosquito vector behaviour for malaria control strategies, such as monitoring efficacy of insecticides against mosquitoes at sentinel sites for the ongoing national Insecticide Treated Nets (ITN) programme, among other research and programmatic activities.

Another important aspect of the GMP malaria training programme is the availability of PhD scholarships in areas of clinical, field, social science and related laboratory work tenable at the Liverpool and London Schools, the Centre for Medical Parasitology, University of Copenhagen and the Danish

Bilharziasis Laboratory. Three Malawian candidates were admitted to LSTM last year, and three more Malawi graduates have been awarded PhD support this year (2002).

The Training Centre, still in its formative stages, has a director, a deputy director and a driver in place. It is in the process of recruiting more of its core staff, which will include an administrative assistant. The core team will be complemented by relevant experts from time to time, depending on the nature of courses in progress at the Centre. The Centre activities are overseen by a **Board** which is scheduled to meet once a year, with members from within the college and the Ministry of Health and Population. Day to day operational issues are guided by a smaller committee, the **Action Group**. A wider multisectoral **local training committee** consisting of malaria experts, trainers, policy makers and the media will guide future training plans for the Centre. The core team looks forward to collaborating with all those involved in training and malaria control work, both within and outside the College, and also internationally.

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Director

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Malaria in pregnancy is serious!

Malaria in pregnancy can lead to:

- Low birth weight babies
- Maternal Anaemia
- Miscarriage
- Death of birth mother and baby

As Health Professionals it is **EASY** to
PREVENT and **TREAT** malaria by:

1. **Recommending the use of insecticide treated mosquito nets every night of the year**
2. **Making sure all pregnant women receive SP**
3. **Preventing and treating anaemia by providing Iron tablets**

Remember the Treatment Protocols:

- Iron should be given every day throughout the second and third trimesters
- Three tables of SP should be given and taken at EVERY monthly antenatal visit after quickening until one month before delivery
- Observe the women taking SP - provide them with water and reassure them it can be taken on an empty stomach.