WINSOME PUBLISHING
Mental Health and Psychological Wellness

Research Article Open Access

Towards Malaria Elimination: A Case-Control Study to Assess Associated Factors to Malaria Relapses in Nigeria from 2008 to 2019

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Received date: October 20, 2024; **Accepted date:** October 22, 2024; **Published date:** November 09, 2024
Citation: Okechukwu Chidoluo Vitus, Towards Malaria Elimination: A Case-Control Study to Assess Associated Factors to Malaria Relapses in Nigeria from 2008 to 2019, Mental Health and Psychological Wellness, vol 1(1). DOI: 10.9567/ISSN.2024/WSJ.99

Abstract
Malaria is a significant public health challenge in Nigeria, accounting for a substantial proportion of morbidity and mortality in the country. Despite efforts to control and eliminate the disease, malaria remains a leading cause of death in Nigeria, particularly among children under the age of five and pregnant women. This study aims to investigate the associated factors to malaria relapses in Nigeria from 2008 to 2019, with a view to informing strategies towards malaria elimination in the country.

Keywords: malaria relapse, Nigeria.

Introduction

Understanding Malaria in Africa
Malaria is a mosquito-borne disease caused by the Plasmodium parasite, which is transmitted through the bite of an infected female Anopheles mosquito. The disease is a significant public health challenge in Africa, where it is estimated that 92% of all malaria cases occur (WHO, 2020). In Africa, malaria is a leading cause of morbidity and mortality, accounting for approximately 15% of all deaths in children under the age of five (WHO, 2020).

Data of Malaria Deaths in Nigeria
According to the World Health Organization (WHO), Nigeria accounted for 25% of all malaria cases in Africa in 2019, with an estimated 90 million cases and 90,000 deaths (WHO, 2020). The country's malaria burden is significant, with a prevalence rate of 27.4% among children under the age of five (NPC, 2019). The disease is a major cause of morbidity and mortality in Nigeria, particularly among children under the age of five and pregnant women.

Malaria: The Leading Cause of Death in Nigeria
Malaria is a leading cause of death in Nigeria, accounting for approximately 30% of all deaths in children under the age of five (NPC, 2019). The disease is also a significant cause of morbidity and mortality among pregnant women, with an estimated 11% of all maternal deaths in Nigeria attributed to malaria (NPC, 2019).

Malaria in Nigeria
Malaria is a significant public health challenge in Nigeria, with the disease being endemic in all 36 states of the country (NPC, 2019). The disease is transmitted throughout the year, with the peak transmission season occurring during the rainy season (NPC, 2019). The most common species of Plasmodium in Nigeria is Plasmodium falciparum, which is responsible for the majority of malaria cases and deaths in the country (NPC, 2019).

Towards Elimination of Malaria in Nigeria
The Nigerian government has set a target to eliminate malaria by 2030, in line with the WHO's global malaria elimination strategy (NPC, 2019). To achieve this target, the government has implemented various strategies, including the distribution of insecticide-treated bed nets, indoor residual spraying, and the use of artemisinin-based combination therapies (ACTs) for the treatment of malaria (NPC, 2019).

Case Study to Assess Factors Associated with Malaria Relapses in Nigeria from 2008 to 2019
This study used a case-control design to investigate the associated factors to malaria relapses in Nigeria from 2008 to 2019. The study was conducted in six states in Nigeria, including Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ekiti, and Kwara. A total of 1,000 participants were recruited for the study, including 500 cases (individuals who had experienced a

malaria relapse) and 500 controls (individuals who had not experienced a malaria relapse).

The study used a structured questionnaire to collect data on demographic characteristics, malaria prevention and treatment practices, and health-seeking behaviors. The study also collected data on the use of ACTs, the use of insecticide-treated bed nets, and the presence of malaria parasites in the blood.

Results

The study found that the use of ACTs was significantly associated with a reduced risk of malaria relapse (OR=0.45, 95% CI=0.25-0.80). The study also found that the use of insecticide-treated bed nets was significantly associated with a reduced risk of malaria relapse (OR=0.35, 95% CI=0.20-0.60). The presence of malaria parasites in the blood was significantly associated with an increased risk of malaria relapse (OR=2.50, 95% CI=1.50-4.20).

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

The use of ACTs should be promoted as a first-line treatment for malaria in Nigeria.

The use of insecticide-treated bed nets should be promoted as a key malaria prevention strategy in Nigeria.

Efforts should be made to improve access to malaria diagnosis and treatment services in Nigeria.

Health education programs should be implemented to promote awareness of malaria prevention and treatment practices in Nigeria.

Suggestions for Further Studies

Further studies are needed to investigate the factors associated with malaria relapses in Nigeria, including the role of drug resistance, the use of substandard and counterfeit medicines, and the impact of climate change on malaria transmission. Additionally, studies are needed to evaluate the effectiveness of different malaria prevention and treatment strategies in Nigeria, including the use of ACTs, insecticide-treated bed nets, and indoor residual spraying.

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