



World Malaria Day

For Prelims: Malaria - causes, symptoms, vaccine, Efforts to Control Malaria

For Mains: Health, Malaria and its Eradication

Why in News?

[World Malaria Day](#) is observed every year on **25th April**.

- It was established by the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) in 2007 to raise awareness about malaria.
- The theme for World Malaria Day 2023 is "**Time to deliver zero malaria: invest, innovate, implement**".

What is Malaria?

- **About:**
 - [Malaria](#) is a life-threatening disease caused by the **Plasmodium parasite**.
 - This parasite is transmitted to humans **through the bites of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes**.
 - Malaria is **most common in tropical and subtropical regions** of the world, including sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, and South America.
 - While **Plasmodium falciparum is responsible for more deaths, Plasmodium vivax is the most widespread** of all of the malaria species.
- **Symptoms:**
 - Once inside the human body, the **parasites multiply in the liver and then infect red blood cells**, causing symptoms such as fever, chills, headache, muscle aches, and fatigue.
 - In **severe cases**, malaria can lead to **organ failure, coma, and death**.
- **Vaccine:**
 - Till now, no malaria vaccine has shown the benchmark efficacy of 75% set by WHO. Still, WHO gave a go-ahead for the **first malaria vaccine called RTS,S** to be rolled out in high transmission African countries understanding the urgency of malaria control and prevention.
 - It has relatively **low efficacy somewhere between 30-40%**.
 - This vaccine has been developed by a collaborative effort of several organisations including GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation etc.
 - In India, [Bharat Biotech](#) has been granted license to manufacture this vaccine.
 - **Similar to RTS,S vaccine the Oxford University has developed a vaccine called R21 which is still waiting for the WHO's approval.**
 - Ghana and Nigeria have approved this vaccine for use in their countries.
 - It is also being manufactured by Serum Institute of India.
- **Malaria Cases:**
 - As per the [World Malaria Report 2022](#), the disease claimed the lives of an estimated 6,19,000 people in 2021.

- The report also highlighted that India has shown a **significant decline in malaria cases and deaths in past 10 years.**

What are the Efforts Made to Contain Malaria?

- **Globally:**
 - **Global Malaria Program:**
 - It was launched by WHO and is responsible for coordinating WHO's global efforts to control and eliminate malaria.
 - Its work is guided by the "Global technical strategy for malaria 2016–2030".
 - The strategy aims to reduce malaria case incidence and mortality rates by at least 40% by 2020, at least 75% by 2025 and at least 90% by 2030 against a 2015 baseline.
 - **Malaria Elimination Initiative:**
 - It was launched by **Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.**
 - This initiative focuses on eliminating malaria in certain regions of the world through a combination of strategies, including increasing access to effective treatments, reducing the mosquito population, and developing new tools and technologies to combat the disease.
 - **E-2025 initiative:**
 - In 2021, WHO launched the E-2025 initiative to halt the transmission of malaria in 25 identified countries by 2025.
- **India's efforts:**
 - **National Vector-Borne Disease Control Programme:** It is an umbrella programme for prevention and control of vector borne diseases viz. **Malaria, Japanese Encephalitis (JE), Dengue, Chikungunya, Kala-azar** and **Lymphatic Filariasis.**
 - **National Malaria Control Programme (NMCP):** Launched in 1953, it is built around three key activities:
 - Insecticidal residual spray (IRS) with DDT
 - Monitoring and surveillance of cases
 - Treatment of patients
 - **National Framework for Malaria Elimination 2016-2030:**
 - Based on WHO Global Technical Strategy for Malaria 2016–2030 (GTS), the goals of the NFME are:
 - Eliminate malaria (zero indigenous cases) throughout the entire country by 2030
 - Maintain malaria-free status in areas where malaria transmission has been interrupted and prevent re-introduction of malaria.
 - **High Burden to High Impact (HBHI) Initiative:** It was started in four states (West Bengal, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh) in July 2019.
 - **Distribution of Long-Lasting Insecticidal Nets (LLINs)** to high burden areas has led to a reduction in endemicity in these 4 very high endemic states.
 - **Malaria Elimination Research Alliance-India (MERA-India):** It has been established by **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** with the conglomeration of partners working on malaria control.

Conclusion

- India's aim is to be malaria-free by 2027 and to eliminate the disease by 2030. Through various measures, the country has made stupendous progress in thwarting malaria, by reducing the disease by 66% between 2018 and 2022.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q. Widespread resistance of malarial parasite to drugs like chloroquine has prompted attempts to develop a malarial vaccine to combat malaria. Why is it difficult to develop an effective malaria vaccine? (2010)

- (a) Malaria is caused by several species of Plasmodium
- (b) Man does not develop immunity to malaria during natural infection
- (c) Vaccines can be developed only against bacteria
- (d) Man is only an intermediate host and not the definitive host

Ans: (b)

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