

Alternative malaria treatment may not work

July 14 2006

British health authorities are urging tourists not to rely on alternative treatment such as homeopathy to fight malaria.

The warning says these alternative health centers are wrongly recommending to backpackers unproven homeopathic remedies instead of effective conventional drugs, reports The Times of London.

Citing an investigation, the report said every one of 10 randomly selected homeopathic clinics and pharmacies was willing to recommend its products as an alternative to proven prophylactic drugs, in defiance of advice from the Health Protection Agency.

Homeopathy practitioners believe in treating "like with like," that is using concoctions that would produce similar symptoms in a healthy person and they use highly diluted drugs or remedies for treatment.

Tropical medicine experts say homeopathy offers no protection against malaria and other life-threatening diseases.

Ron Behrens with London's Hospital for Tropical Diseases Travel Clinic says it is critical that people visiting malarial regions do not substitute homeopathic preparations for prophylactic drugs.

A spokeswoman with the Society of Homeopaths expressed concern to the newspaper about the findings, saying there is no evidence that homeopathy guards against malaria. She said it should be used together with conventional medicine.

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Citation: Alternative malaria treatment may not work (2006, July 14) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2006-07-alternative-malaria-treatment.html>

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