

New study finds 125 million pregnancies globally at risk from malaria every year

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A new study by the Malaria in Pregnancy Consortium has estimated that more than 125 million pregnancies around the world are at risk from malaria every year. Until now, estimates have only been available for endemic areas in Africa.

The [Malaria](#) in Pregnancy Consortium was established in 2007 at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine to improve the control of malaria in pregnancy. Burden assessment is an important first step in a country's malaria control plan in order to target limited resources and, as such, is one of the Consortium's four key work areas.

Consortium leader Professor Feiko ter Kuile from LSTM explained: "Until now, it was impossible to estimate the number of pregnancies at risk of malaria for endemic areas outside Africa. For the study, we estimated the sizes of populations at risk of malaria and used data from various sources to calculate the annual number of pregnancies in each country. We then multiplied the number of pregnancies by the fraction of the population living within the spatial limits of malaria transmission in that country. We calculated that in 2007, 125.2 million pregnancies occurred in areas with *P.falciparum* and/or *P.vivax* transmission."

This figure represents 60% of all pregnancies globally and although the study does not provide information on the actual number of women infected with malaria during pregnancy, it does make an important contribution to the global level of knowledge on malaria in pregnancy and will go some way towards informing policy decisions, as Professor

ter Kuile explained:

"We now have a reliable estimate of the numbers at risk globally from malaria in pregnancy, which on its own is an important spur to further investment to tackle this problem. More significantly, the study is an important first step towards a spatial map of the burden of malaria in [pregnancy](#) and should help policy makers allocate resources for research and control of this important public health problem."

More information: Dellicour S, Tatem AJ, Guerra CA, Snow RW, ter Kuile FO (2010) Quantifying the Number of Pregnancies at Risk of Malaria in 2007: A Demographic Study. PLoS Med 7(1): e1000221. doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.1000221

Provided by Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine

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