

Malaria on way out in third of nations hit: study

October 17 2011

Nearly a third of all nations in which malaria is endemic are working to eliminate the disease within a decade, according to a new report released Monday in the United States.

The [World Health Organization](#) has awarded malaria-free certification to three nations in the past four years, according to the report released by the [Roll Back Malaria](#) Partnership and authored by WHO experts.

The study -- which looks at the public-private partnership's work over the past decade -- was presented at the opening of a malaria forum sponsored by the [Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation](#) on Monday in Seattle.

The number of deaths from malaria has fallen by 38 percent over the past 10 years, according to the study. But the disease, which is preventable and treatable, is still endemic in 108 countries and territories.

Every year, an estimated 781,000 people die of malaria, most of them in sub-Saharan Africa, primarily affecting children under the age of five. The disease affects 40 percent of the world's population.

If current successes in the fight against malaria continue, more than three million lives can be saved by 2015 with the elimination of the disease in eight to 10 countries, RBM said.

"The world has made remarkable progress with [malaria control](#)," said Robert Newman, director of the WHO's Global Malaria Program. That program authored the report, "Eliminating Malaria, Learning from the Past, Looking Ahead."

"Better diagnostic testing and surveillance has provided a clearer picture of where we are on the ground -- and has shown that there are countries eliminating malaria in all endemic regions of the world," he added.

"WHO continually monitors this progress and ensures that these countries are fully supported in their efforts to be malaria-free."

RBM was set up in 1998 by three UN agencies and the [World Bank](#) and now has more than 500 "partner" organizations which coordinate work and pool expertise.

The group said nations must aim for "universal coverage with malaria control tools, including insecticide treated nets, indoor residual spraying, diagnostic testing, and effective malaria treatments."

The Gates Foundation has organized its second malaria forum this week in order to rally support for countries battling to become malaria-free.

"In 2011, with the highly effective interventions we have available, no one should die from [malaria](#)," Newman said.

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Citation: Malaria on way out in third of nations hit: study (2011, October 17) retrieved 3 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2011-10-malaria-nations.html>

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