

# Malaria prevention saves children's lives

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Malaria continues to be a major disease worldwide, but while funding projects are working hard to improve malaria prevention it is difficult to measure how effective these interventions are. New research published in BioMed Central's open access journal *Malaria Journal* has used a Lives Saved Tool (LiST) model to show that the increase in funding for the prevention of malaria has prevented 850,000 child deaths in the decade between 2001 and 2010 across Africa.

According to the WHO, malaria caused an estimated 655 000 deaths in 2010, mostly among African children. They estimate that a child dies every minute due to malaria in Africa. Deaths which are unnecessary, because malaria is both preventable and curable. In addition to diagnosis and treatment of sick children, simple solutions to prevent the diseases like insecticide treated mosquito nets (ITN) and [malaria prevention](#) during pregnancy, (IPTp), have all been shown to reduce the number of deaths due to malaria. Initiatives like [Roll Back Malaria](#), set up in 1998, aim to reduce [child mortality](#) due to malaria by two thirds, by 2015, using large scale implementation of these simple solutions.

Researchers from USA at Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, in collaboration with Johns Hopkins, the WHO and the [Malaria Control](#) and Evaluation Partnership in Africa (MACEPA), used the LiST model to investigate the impact of malaria prevention in the decade between 2001 and 2010 across 43 countries in sub-Saharan Africa where malaria is endemic. The team, led by Dr Thomas Eisele, based their model on UN estimates of malaria deaths over the year 2000 and future population growth, the effectiveness of ITNs and IPTp in

preventing [child deaths](#), and the number of households using ITN to protect their children.

The LiST model conservatively estimates that malaria prevention has saved 850,000 children's lives over the past decade. 99% of these were saved by using ITN alone. Dr Thomas Eisele commented, "Malaria continues to cause a tremendous amount of child deaths throughout Africa. If 100% of the children at risk of malaria had insecticide [mosquito nets](#) we estimate as many as 2.77 million additional children's lives could be saved by 2015."

These figures are believed to be the lower estimate of deaths prevented by anti-malaria initiatives since they do not include the impact of better access to treatment with anti-malarials. However, the threat of malaria remains and both prevention and treatment plans need to be sustained for these improvements to be maintained.

**More information:** Estimates of child deaths prevented from malaria prevention scale-up in Africa 2001-2010 Thomas P Eisele, David A Larsen, Neff Walker, Richard E Cibulskis, Joshua O Yukich, Charlotte M Zikusooka and Richard W Steketee, *Malaria Journal* (in press)

Provided by BioMed Central

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