

Increasing malarial drug resistance a growing threat

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(HealthDay)—The parasite that causes malaria is growing increasingly resistant to the drugs commonly used to fight it, according to new surveillance reports. But several new drugs are in development, and at least one in early clinical trials may offer new hope.

"Although there has been considerable progress in [malaria control](#) in the past decade, the battle against malaria is far from won, and there is still much more to do," Brian Greenwood, M.D., professor of [tropical medicine](#) at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, who wrote a commentary accompanying the new research, told *HealthDay*. All of the new research, along with Greenwood's editorial, appears in the July 31 issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

Especially worrisome is the growing power of malaria parasites to survive the drugs that are designed to kill them, Greenwood said. One study reported widespread resistance to the drug artemisinin across mainland Southeast Asia. A second study found resistance to a drug combination—dihydroartemisinin-piperaquine—in Cambodia. Resistance to this drug is particularly concerning because this combination is often used in the most difficult-to-treat malaria infections.

Fortunately, even those who show resistance may get well when given longer courses of medication. "Many of these patients will get better eventually if they are treated for many days or treated with an additional effective drug," Greenwood said, adding that the focus must remain on controlling the spread of [malaria](#), treating those who are sick with existing medications, and developing new drugs to control the disease.

More information: [Full Article](#)

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