A team of researchers from the U.K., Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania has found that a higher prevalence of malarial infections in a given community leads to higher numbers of people with severe malarial symptoms. In their paper published in the journal Science, the group describes their study of malaria infection patterns at multiple sites in East Africa over the course of 14 years. Terrie Taylor and Laurence Slutsker with Michigan State University have published a Perspective piece in the same journal issue outlining the challenges involved with tracking malaria infections in Africa and the work done by the team in this new effort.

In looking at their data, the researchers found that for every 25% increase (over a baseline of 17.6%) in the prevalence of infections, annual rates of those people with severe infections doubled. They also found that as the prevalence of infections rose, the average age of patients admitted to hospitals in the area dropped.


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