Global maps created to show malaria hotspots

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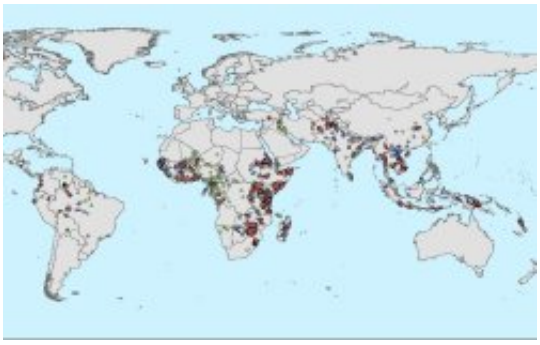

Map of where malaria has been sampled in populations between 1985 and 2006, from the website. (See www.map.ox.ac.uk)

Global maps are being created that will define, for the first time in over 40 years, the distribution of malaria risk worldwide. The atlas will help those involved in malaria control.

The Malaria Atlas Project (MAP), a collaboration between the Kenya Medical Research Institute and the University of Oxford, has been funded by the Wellcome Trust to produce the maps. Its goals are described in *PLoS Medicine* this month.

Dr Simon Hay in Oxford's Zoology Department, a member of the MAP team, said: 'The aim of the project is not just to assemble data but to link these information to environmental and population data and make

continuous global maps of malaria risk to help rationalise control.'

Across the world malaria scientists collect information on how many people are infected with malaria parasites. Never before have all the data been gathered into a single source and linked to a map of the world. MAP has so far assembled information from 3126 communities in 79 countries, and represents the single largest repository of contemporary information on malaria risk to date.

MAP intends to give open access to its data, so that it can help anyone and everyone involved in malaria control. A member of the team has developed an interface between the MAP data and Google Earth.

'How we design malaria control and measure its impact depends on knowing how much malaria exists in a given area,' says Professor Bob Snow from the Centre for Tropical Medicine at Oxford and based at the Centre for Geographic Medicine in Nairobi. 'Like any war, knowing where your enemy is located and in what strength determines how you engage them.'

For more information see www.map.ox.ac.uk .

Source: University of Oxford

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