



### Bed Nets Help Fight Malaria

Malaria can be deadly. And no one knows that better than Mary Hamel, MD, malaria branch medical epidemiologist, in charge of malaria research at the Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) Research Station in Kisumu, Kenya. Since her arrival, Hamel has seen firsthand the high numbers of childhood deaths caused by malaria. She also has personal experience with malaria, having contracted the disease during an earlier visit to Africa.

But that hasn't stopped Hamel, shown here with a two-year-old recovering from malaria.

The July 2006 issue of *Good Housekeeping* magazine featured Hamel's work in studying the effectiveness of various malaria treatments and preventive measures, including the use of insecticide-treated bed nets.

"Malaria is the number one killer of children worldwide," Hamel says in the interview. "So this [Kenya] is where I want to be. This is the place where my work has the most impact."

Malaria is a parasitic disease caused by the bite of an infected *Anopheline* mosquito. Human-to-human infections are passed through the mosquito and characterized by fever, chills, and flu-like symptoms. The devastating effects can be reduced and prevented through appropriate use of insecticide-treated bed nets, indoor residual insecticide spraying, quick detection and treatment of cases with appropriate drugs, and intermittent preventive treatment of pregnant women to reduce anemia and low-birth-weight babies.

On a continent where, reportedly, a child dies from malaria every 30 seconds, Hamel "is saddened by the fact that, for lack of a simple, inexpensive [insecticide-treated] bed net, children in Africa continue to get infected." Field research conducted by KEMRI in Kenya suggests that nets treated with insecticide reduce infant deaths by as much as 25 percent.

Stateside, Hamel's dedication to eliminating malaria abroad has not gone unnoticed. "This is a really great story about Mary's work in Kisumu, Kenya, but it speaks volumes to the good work that CDC does, and why," says Mark Eberhard, PhD, director, Division of Parasitic Diseases, NCID. "Needless to say, DPD is very proud of the work that Mary and its other overseas assignees do."

"Malaria is a disease of poverty," Hamel notes in the article. She also pointed out that more nets are needed, as there are not enough to go around. The CDC Foundation answered Hamel's call for assistance by establishing the Bed Nets for Children Program, which provides insecticide-treated bed nets for CDC-affiliated programs to distribute in Africa.

For more information on malaria, click [here](#).

For more information on insecticide-treated bed nets and residual spraying, click [here](#).

For more information on the CDC Foundation's Bed Nets for Children Program, click [here](#).

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