

WHO RECOMMENDS FIRST ANTI-MALARIAL VACCINE

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The vaccine was used in a pilot programme Ghana, Kenya and Malawi.

The development comes at a time when the WHO and its partners have reported a stagnation in the progress against the disease that kills more than 2,60,000 African children under the age of five annually. Malaria remains a primary cause of childhood illness and death in sub-Saharan Africa, according to the WHO.

“For centuries, malaria has stalked sub-Saharan Africa, causing immense personal suffering,” said WHO Regional Director for Africa Dr. Matshidiso Moeti. “We have long hoped for an effective malaria vaccine and now for the first time ever, we have such a vaccine recommended for widespread use. Today’s recommendation offers a glimmer of hope for the continent which shoulders the heaviest burden of the disease and we expect many more African children to be protected from malaria and grow into healthy adults.”

The vaccine does significantly reduce life-threatening severe malaria, Dr. Tedros said, but added that, “It’s not the only tool. Vaccination against #malaria does not replace or reduce the need for other measures, including bed nets [against mosquitoes].”

RTS,S was first authorised in 2015 by the European Medicines Agency for use in Africa in infants and children.

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