



**MMS Bulletin #152**

*Child Health beyond the Age of Five - Neglected and Forgotten?*

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***Summary of the Technical Exchange 2019 of the Swiss  
Malaria Group***

**The Increasing Risk of the Poorest and Most  
Vulnerable Dying From Malaria**

By Yuri Shak-Tschurr

*The recently published World Malaria Report from the World Health Organization (WHO) shows: Malaria is increasingly a disease of poverty and inequity, with the most vulnerable at greatest risk of dying from a mosquito bite. The Swiss Malaria Group, a Swiss multi-stakeholder leadership network for a malaria-free world, underlines the importance to further increase malaria engagement, build on earlier successes in pushing back the disease and leaving no one behind.*



Swiss Malaria Group (SMG) Technical Exchange in Geneva, 28th November 2019: participants attacking the mosquito with various malaria tools. Photo: Olivier Gisiger for Swiss Malaria Group

## ***Malaria status quo***

According to the World Malaria Report 2019, a total of 228 million cases of malaria were reported in 2018, compared to 231 million cases in 2017; and 405'000 people died of malaria in 2018, compared to 416'000 in 2017. Even though malaria deaths and cases are declining at a slowed rate, progress has stalled. This deadly disease still strikes hardest against pregnant women and children under five years old (67% of all malaria deaths worldwide) in Africa. An estimated 11 million pregnant women in sub-Saharan Africa – 29% of all pregnancies – were infected with malaria in 2018, resulting in nearly 900,000 children in 38 African countries being born with a low birth weight. This year, the WHO places emphasis on protecting pregnant women and children from malaria. Carole Küng, Executive Secretary of Swiss Malaria Group, underlines: “Fighting malaria can break the vicious cycle of extreme poverty by enabling people to stay healthy and go to work, and giving the children the opportunity to go to school”.

## ***Switzerland: Malaria center of excellence***

With many key stakeholders located in Switzerland – from innovative pharmaceutical companies to international non-governmental organizations to strong academic research – and the country’s vast expertise and know-how, the country plays a crucial role in global health and in fighting malaria. Health is Switzerland’s most important export commodity and needs to be made accessible for all, including the poorest and the weakest. A long-term commitment to fight malaria in an integrative way is one of the most efficient investments in global health and development. As a network of research institutions, civil society, public and private sector, the Swiss Malaria Group provides leadership against malaria. Together, it covers the whole intervention chain from research and innovation to large-scale implementation and advocacy on the ground.



SMG Technical Exchange in Geneva: A fruitful discussion on “the new malaria landscape”. Photo: Olivier Gisiger for Swiss Malaria Group

Once a year, the network organizes a Technical Exchange for its members, their technical staff and interested stakeholders. This year’s Technical Exchange on November 28 was hosted by RBM Partnership to End Malaria at the Geneva Global Health Campus. Representatives of Geneva-based global organisations and SMG members have been invited to contribute to the exchange and to present the role of their organisations in the new global malaria landscape. Abdourahmane Diallo, CEO of the RBM Partnership to End Malaria as well as Alexandra Cameron (Unitaid), and Scott Filler (The Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria) presented their contribution to the global malaria control effort. These insightful keynotes were followed by an exchange on innovations and new initiatives of Swiss Malaria Group members including Biovision, FIND, Merck, Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV), Novartis,

RBM Partnership to End Malaria, the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute (Swiss TPH), Solidarmed, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and Terre des Hommes. More details and presentations can be found on the Swiss Malaria Group website.

Ending malaria represents one of the greatest challenges but also opportunities to date. In order to reach the SDG 3 target: healthy lives and well-being for all, we need to further integrate malaria interventions, including prevention, diagnosis and treatment into our health systems to reach those most in need. At the same time, we need to strengthen global efforts to achieve universal health coverage, since global health risks do not stop at the national border.

## Reference

- WHO. World Malaria Report 2019 <https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/world-malaria-report-2019>



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