



African Contributions to Global Health

Video Transcript

Malaria research success stories from Africa

Malaria remains a major public health concern in Africa, with more than 215 million cases in 2019. Despite the current progress in reducing malaria-related deaths, the global number of cases is stagnating. For malaria caused by the parasite *Plasmodium falciparum*, the current treatment is Artemisinin-based combination therapies. However, malaria-endemic countries are reporting resistance to this treatment. This is putting all control and elimination efforts on hold. We now urgently need new treatments. To that end, researchers in Africa are conducting numerous antimalarial clinical trials.

These trials have strong collaboration partners from around the world. They are testament to what the former director of the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute, Professor Marcel Tanner, once said. He stated that "mutual learning between the North and the South is key for change in global health". In addition, strong African leadership, African clinical trial centres, and sustainable research funding can speed up malaria drug development in Africa.

One example of strong African leadership in drug discovery is Kelly Chibale, a Zambian chemist. Kelly Chibale changed the landscape of drug discovery in Africa by establishing the H3D drug discovery centre in Cape Town, South Africa. This centre of excellence encourages mutual learning and collaborates with industry, philanthropic organisations, and Product Development Partnerships. The centre has discovered a ground-breaking modern antimalarial compound which has successfully completed the first human trials. The compound could potentially be used as a preventive or a component of a single-cure treatment.

Similarly, the West African Network for Clinical Trials of Antimalarial Drugs consortium has contributed to major changes in malaria treatment and retreatment policies in West Africa. It is funded by the European Developing Countries Training and Partnership. Given this success, the West African Network for Clinical Trials of Antimalarial Drugs has received a second research grant, named WANECAM 2. It brings together ten research institutions, one pharmaceutical company and a Product Development Partnership. WANECAM 2 is pursuing the latest clinical development phases of a new generation of antimalarial drugs. These trials are ongoing. This new potential treatment is an important milestone considering that resistance to current antimalarials is rising.



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With all these achievements, we can only agree with Zambian chemist Kelly Chibale. He said that: "Africa is no longer just a place to conduct human malaria clinical trials. Africa is now also a place for malaria drug discovery and development. It is important to combat malaria not just because of the unacceptably high numbers of deaths it is responsible for especially among our children but also because malaria continues to choke economic growth on the continent."