

Malaria infections worsen dengue attacks - research

By Gadosa Lamtey

MALARIA infection among dengue fever patients complicated their treatment and occasioned several death occurrences, initial reports by the National Institute of Medical Research (NIMR) have shown.

The announcement comes after the institute finally released findings of research work conducted across the three districts of Dar es Salaam (Ilala, Kinondoni and Temeke) which it has also submitted to the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare.

Previously, the institute had failed to release the research results for lack of laboratory reagents for malaria parasite identification.

In an interview with this paper over the weekend, NIMR Chief Research Scientist, Dr Leonard Mboera said they have discovered that a considerable number of dengue fever patients also suffered from malaria.

He said, unwittingly, doctors concentrated on treating the feared dengue fever and placed less emphasis on malaria and as such the

patients remained susceptible to the malaria.

“We now recommend that, whenever there is an outbreak of the disease (dengue fever) both treatments be administered concurrently to speed up treatment period and subsequently reduce the number of deaths,” he explained.

As for the previously scarce laboratory reagents, Dr Mboera explained that they are not available in the country and have to be ordered from Kenya.

“We failed to complete our research in time due to lack of the laboratory reagents...” he admitted explaining that the reagents are not sold locally because they are not used frequently.

“But we now have them and our research work is progressing well,” he reassured stakeholders.

As for the dengue outbreak, the doctor said Kinondoni District had the most patients followed by Ilala and finally Temeke.

He said in Kinondoni District, the study was conducted in the following areas Msasani, Sinza and Kibamba,

while in Temeke District it was done in Kigamboni, Chang’ombe and Chamanzi and for Ilala District it was conducted in Kivukoni, Jangwani and Tabata.

Dengue fever was first recorded in the country in 2010 where about 40 people were diagnosed with the disease.

In mid-2013 172 people were again diagnosed with the disease.

Almost a year later, April this year, dengue fever was again found in Dar es Salaam with over 400 cases reported claiming at least 20 lives.

In the wake of the outbreak, the government involved various stakeholders to raise public awareness on the disease, how to protect themselves, the spread methods and measures to take when symptoms are experienced.

During the outbreak, the government also carried out fumigation of all upcountry passenger buses and other public areas to help curb the spread.

As of now, the government

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