

Epidemiology of Malaria in an Urban and a Rural Area Of Benue State Of Nigeria

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Abstract

Malaria remains a major cause of mortality among children under the age of five year; it is endemic throughout Nigeria with seasonal variation. The objective of this study was to determine and compare the current status of malaria in an urban and a rural area of Benue state. A total of 384 blood samples were collected by simple random sampling from respondents in Makurdi township (200) and Orokam district (184) using the finger prick method and observed for the presence of malaria parasite using rapid diagnostic test kits and questionnaires to collect other information. Out of the 384 screened during the period of the study, 31.7% were positive malaria parasite. High prevalence of 41.2% was recorded in children 1-5 years. Infection was slightly higher in males (36.6%) than females with 27.9% ($P>0.05$). The study identified inaccessibility (20.8%) and inconvenience (31.2%) as the major reasons for non-ownership and non-usage of ITNs. The knowledge, attitude and perception revealed that 91.4% cited mosquitoes bites as the main mode of transmission, 51.5% prefer insecticide spray as their means of control while 65.3% uses drugs as treatment remedy. The study also showed that 26.5% of those who reported having ITNs had malaria parasite while 16.3% who reported usage of ITNs every night were positive. 60.42% of the respondents reported acquiring their ITNs through free distribution while 23.18% reported obtaining theirs from market/clinic. Vector study was carried out and mosquitoes were collected using the pyrethrum knockdown collection techniques, 146 mosquitoes were recovered from the study with urban area having a greater number of mosquitoes caught in rooms (94) with a room density of 2.3 at against rural area (52) with room density of 1.6. This study revealed the prevalence of malaria in Makurdi and Orokam, which shows that malaria is endemic and stable in Nigeria in different zones of the country and is a major cause of morbidity and mortality and particularly affects children under 5 years. There is therefore need for more awareness on effective use of drugs and insecticides treated bed nets in malaria treatment and control

Key words: Parasite, Mosquito, Malaria, questionnaire and plasmodium

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I. Background of Study

Malaria is a mosquito-borne infectious disease of humans and caused by parasitic protozoans (a group of single-celled microorganism) belonging to the genus *Plasmodium* (Malaria Fact sheet, 2014). It causes symptoms that typically include fever, fatigue, vomiting and headaches. In severe cases it can cause yellow skin, seizures, coma or death (Caraballo, 2014). The disease is transmitted by the biting of mosquitos, and the symptoms usually begin ten to fifteen days after being bitten. In those who have not been appropriately treated disease may recur months later (Malaria Fact sheet, 2014). In those who have recently survived an infection, re-infection typically causes milder symptoms. This partial resistance disappears over months to years if there is no ongoing exposure to malaria (Caraballo, 2014).

Malaria is transmitted most commonly by an infected female *Anopheles* mosquito. The mosquito bite introduces the parasites from the mosquito's saliva into a person's blood (Malaria Fact sheet, 2014). The parasites then travel to the liver where they mature and reproduce. Five species of *Plasmodium* can infect and be spread by humans (Caraballo, 2014). Most deaths are caused by *P. falciparum* because *P. vivax*, *P. ovale*, and *P. malariae* generally cause milder form of malaria (Malaria Fact sheet, 2014; Caraballo, 2014). The species *P. knowlesi* rarely causes disease in humans but have been known to cause disease in monkeys (Malaria Fact sheet, 2014).

In sub-saharan Africa, five *Anopheles* mosquito species namely *Anopheles gambiae*, *A. arabiensis*, *A. funestus*, *A. nili* and *A. mouchetti* have been described as major vectors of regional importance while about 9 other species are secondary or local vectors. *Anopheles* mosquitoes differ remarkably in their distribution habitats and habits (Gillies and de Meillon, 1968, Oyewole *et al.*, 2007). Gordon and Lavoipierre (1976) observed that almost every species of *Anopheles* mosquito has its own requirements as regards to the physical

conditions of the larval habitats. Sometimes these requirements are similar for different anopheline species but others have such highly specialized requirements that it is unusual to find them in association with other species and therefore useless to search for them in more commonly favoured habitats. Apart from the differences in their ecological habitats, adult female mosquitoes generally differ in their behavior especially biting habits including host blood meal preferences, time and place of biting and resting sites, which are very important in the epidemiology of disease transmission. Sometimes, mosquitoes are strictly zoophilic (feeding on animals only) or strictly anthropophilic (biting humans only), while others bite both man and animals indiscriminately. Also some mosquitoes bite and rest indoors (endophagic and endophilic) but others bite and rest outdoors (exophagic and exophilic). Furthermore, some mosquitoes are crepuscular and nocturnal and others are diurnal (Service, 1993).

The risk of disease can be reduced by preventing mosquito bites by using mosquito nets and insect repellents, or with mosquito-control measures such as spraying insecticides and draining standing water (Caraballo, 2014). The success of malaria control with ITNs has been bogged down by problems of delivery, distribution, usage and even acceptability of this method in Africa (D'Alessandro, 1997). Public awareness and acceptance of insecticide treated nets varies from community to community in countries where this method of malaria control has been adopted. Several medications are available to prevent malaria in travellers to areas where the disease is common. Occasional doses of the medication sulfadoxine/pyrimethamine are recommended in infants and after the first trimester of pregnancy in areas with high rates of malaria. Despite the need, no effective vaccine exists, although efforts to develop one are ongoing (WHO, 2014). The recommended treatment for malaria is a combination of antimalarial medications that includes an artemisinin (Malaria Fact sheet, 2014; Caraballo H, 2014). The second medication may be either mefloquine, lumefantrine, or sulfadoxine/pyrimethamine (WHO, 2010). Quinine along with doxycycline may be used if an artemisinin is not available (WHO, 2010). It is recommended that in areas where the disease is common, malaria is confirmed if possible before treatment is started due to concerns of increasing drug resistance. Resistance has developed to several antimalarial medications; for example, chloroquine-resistant *P. falciparum* has spread to most malarial areas, and resistance to artemisinin has become a problem in some parts of Southeast Asia (WHO, 2014). The disease is widespread in tropical and subtropical regions that are present in a broad band around the equator (Caraballo, 2014). This includes much of Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Malaria is commonly associated with poverty and has a major negative effect on economic development (Gollin and Zimmermann, 2007, Worrall *et al.*, 2005). In Africa it is estimated to result in losses of US\$12 billion a year due to increased healthcare costs, lost ability to work and effects on tourism (Greenwood *et al.*, 2005). The World Health Organization reports there were 198 million cases of malaria worldwide in 2013 (WHO, 2014, GBD, 2014). This resulted in an estimated 584,000 to 855,000 deaths, the majority (90%) of which occurred in Africa (WHO, 2014; World malaria report, 2014).

In Nigeria, malaria is endemic and stable with seasonal variation in different zones of the country and is a major cause of morbidity and mortality and particularly affects children under 5 years (Federal Ministry of Health, F.M.H., 2005, Okeke *et al.*, 2006, Orimadegun *et al.*, 2007). More than 90% of the population is at risk of malaria and at least 50% of the population suffers from at least one episode of malaria each year. Tragically the health status of children under five and of women has remained a major barrier to Nigeria's development. It is estimated that about 100 children under one year and 203 children under five years out of 1000 respectively die annually of malaria (Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey, N.D.H.S., 2003). In other-words one out of every five Nigeria children dies before his or her 5th birthday (Roll Back Malaria, R.B.M., 2000). Among pregnant women, malaria is responsible for more than one in ten deaths and accounts for considerable proportion of low-birth-weight babies born to these mothers (FMH 2005). Beyond the impact on children and pregnant women it affects the general population (RBM 2005, FMH 2005).

Almost 3% of disability adjusted life years are due to malaria mortality globally and 10% in Africa (Bremner *et al.*, 2004). The economic burden of malaria illness on households account for almost 50% of total economic burden of illnesses in malaria holoendemic communities (Uzochukwu and Onwujekwu, 2004). Living in malaria endemic region places an economic burden on households even if they do not actually suffer an episode of malaria, and reducing malaria improves household's living standards (Laxminarayan, 2004). Given that malaria is

endemic throughout Nigeria and that over 50% of the country's population is living below poverty line, malaria incidence may increase significantly in Nigeria because many may not be able to afford the newly introduced drugs due to poverty (Yusuf *et al.*, 2010). Finally, the direct and indirect cost of malaria rose to \$13 billion in 1997 with Africa taking the brunt of the burden, while spending on research, prevention and control worldwide probably amounts to no more than \$2 billion (WHO, 1998). Several factors have been reported to influence the vectorial role of mosquitoes in disease transmission like abundance, biting behaviour, host preference and longevity (Noutcha and Anumudu, 2009). A full understanding of these factors is a prerequisite in planning effective vector control programmes. The increase in environmental modification as a result of

urbanization is usually being accompanied by creation of more breeding sites for mosquitoes which most often lead to the increase in the incidence of mosquito-borne diseases (Amusan *et al.*, 2005).

Any attempt to prevent or control a disease such as malaria in any area or in a locality should first of all be preceded by an extensive evaluation of the magnitude of the prevailing situation. Malaria negatively impacts the social and economic development of communities in Nigeria. It is responsible for school absenteeism and low productivity at work places and on farms. Given the human and financial toll malaria is taking on societies throughout the world, continued research on ways to prevent and treat malaria is essential.

This study is aimed at determining the Epidemiology of Malaria in an Urban and a Rural Area of Benue State. To achieve this aim various objective were met which includes the determination and comparison of the current status of malaria in urban and rural areas in the state, assessment of the people's knowledge of malaria, its transmission, treatment, prevention and control., also to assess the people's knowledge of Insecticide Treated Nets (ITN) and its usage and finally, to determine the mosquito species available in the study area.

II. Materials and Methods

Study area

The study was carried out in Benue state which is in the mid-belt region of Nigeria. It was done in 2 Local government area in the state which are; Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State and Orokam in Ogbadibo Local Government Area. The people of Makurdi local government area are mostly fisher men and farmers who produce yam, Rice, Beans, Cassava, Sweet-potato, Maize, Soya bean, Sorghum, Millet, Sesame, cocoyam etc. Its coordinates are longitude 7°43' - north and latitude 8°32'10" - east. The town is divided by the River Benue into the north and south banks. Ogbadibo is a local government area in Benue State, Nigeria. The local government area is made up of three major districts. These include Otukpa, Orokam and Owukpa. Ogbadibo local government area has Otukpa as its headquarters and have a land mass of about 550sq km with population of over 130,988 people (2006 census). Its coordinates is Latitude 7.0892° or 7° 5' 21.2" north Longitude 7.6499° or 7° 38' 59.6" east. Over 80% of the people in the district engage in farming.

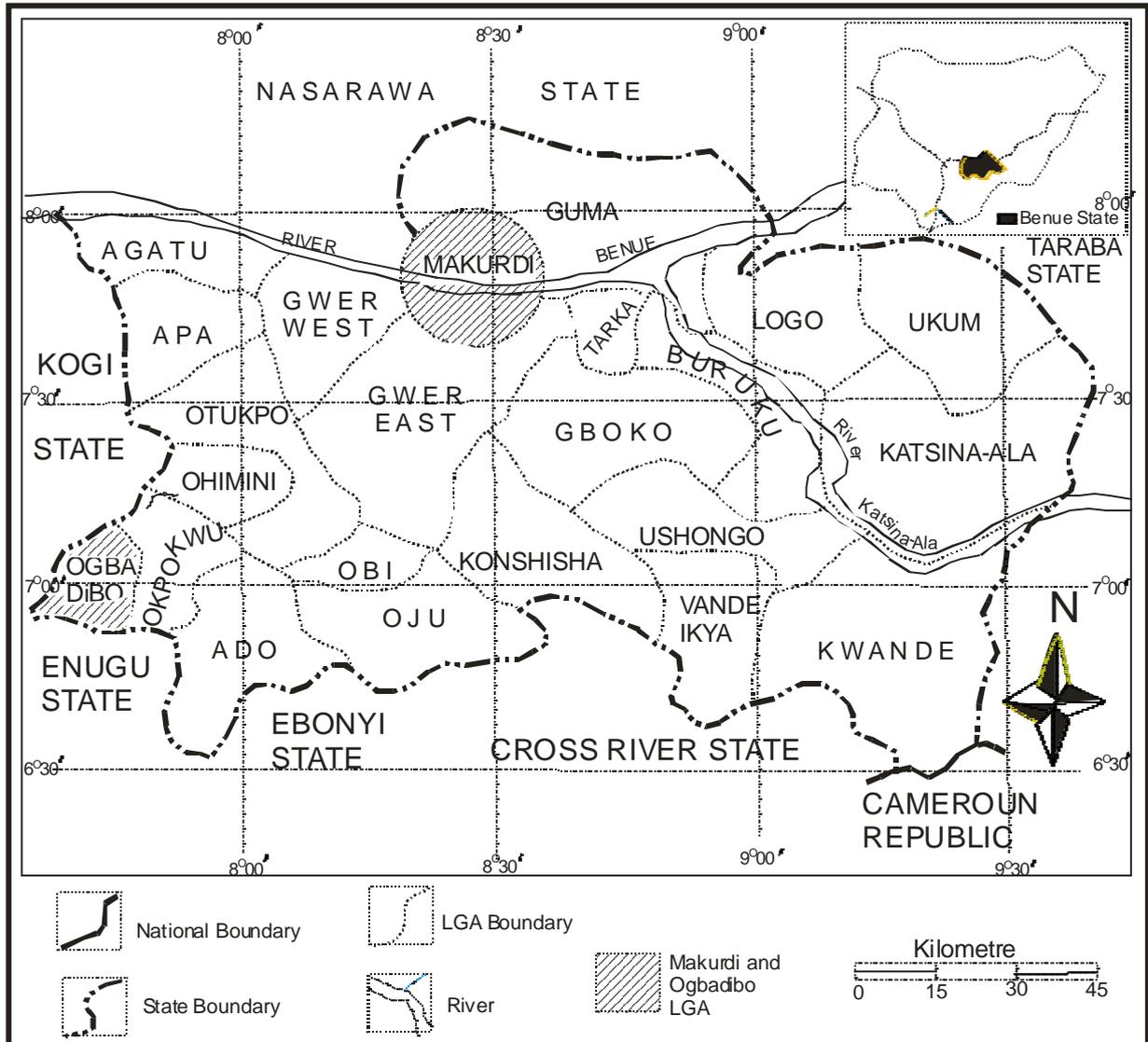


Figure 1: Map of Benue State Showing Makurdi and Ogbadibo Local Government Areas.

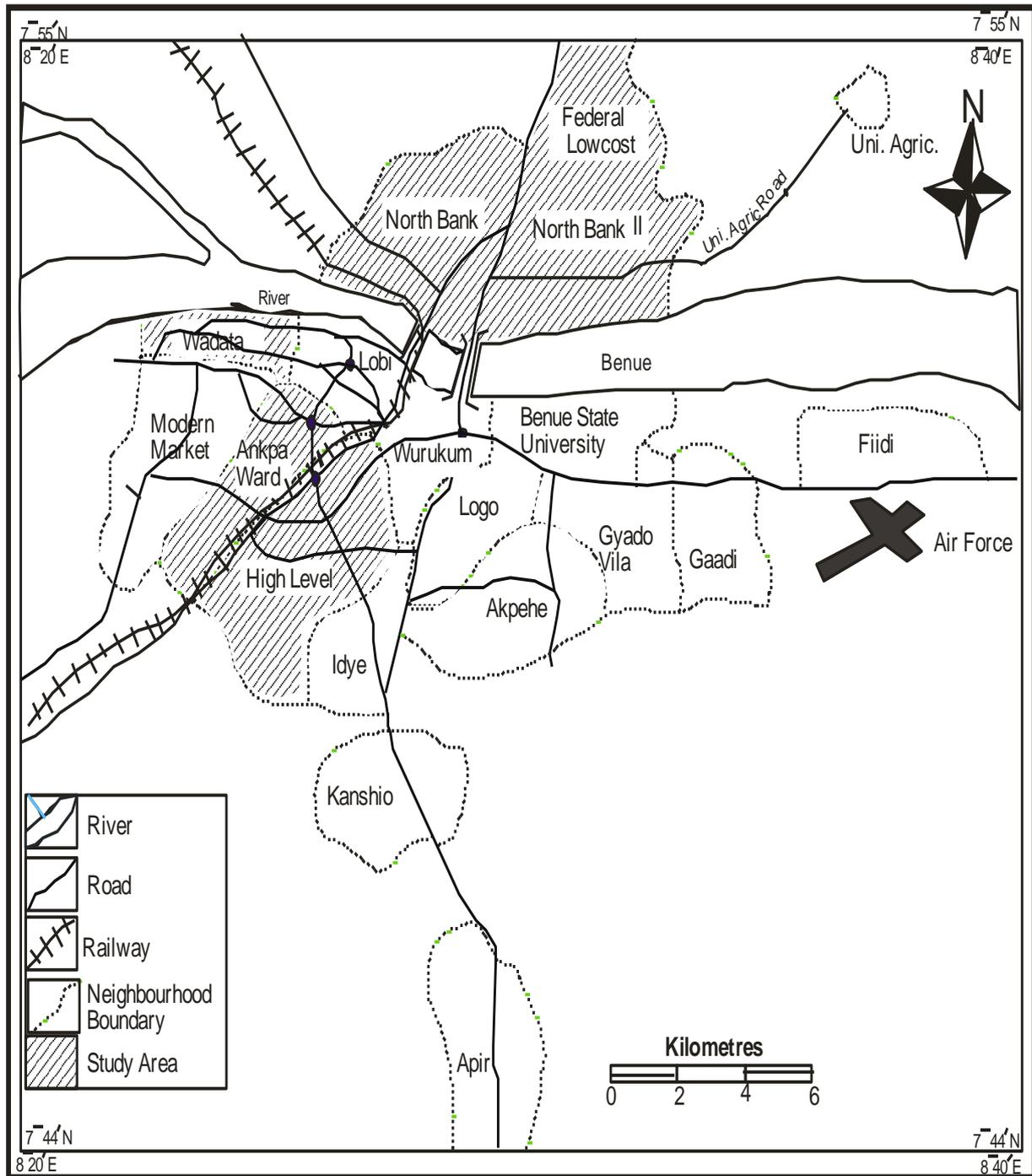


Figure 2: Map of Makurdi Showing Study Areas.

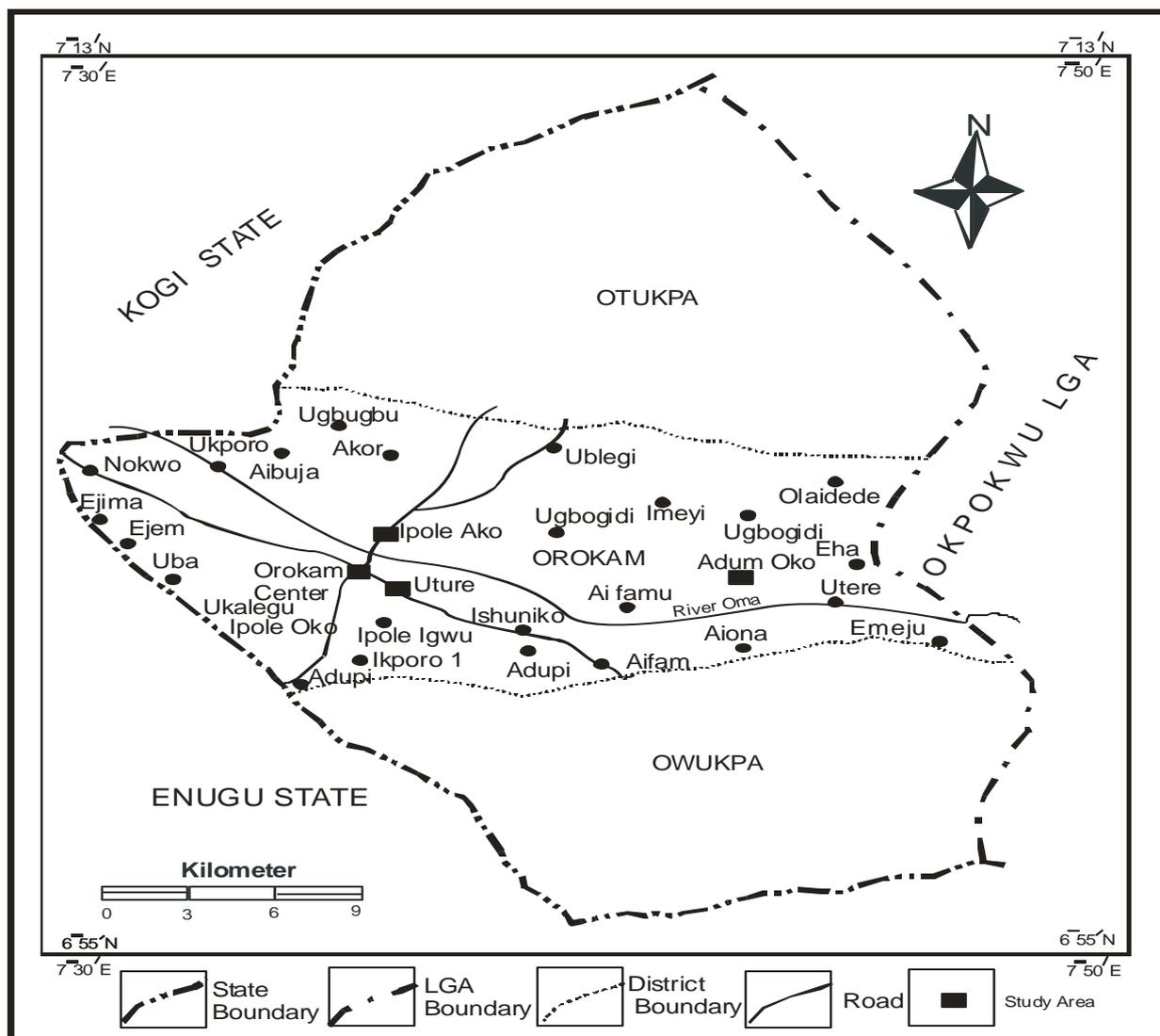


Figure 3: Map of Orokam Showing Study Areas.

Ethical consent.

Letter of introduction was obtained from the department of Biological Sciences, Benue State University, Makurdi which was subsequently taken to the Benue State Ministry of Health and a written permission was obtained which was then taken to the local government councils (Makurdi and Ogbadibo). The individuals that were involved were sensitized and their consent obtained before they partook in the study.

Study population

The sample size was estimated using www.raosoft.com (sample size calculator)

Initial population = 590,797

Level of Significance = 5% Or (0.05=p)

Three hundred and eighty four individuals, comprising of 200 individuals from the urban and 184 from the rural communities constituted the study/research population, cutting across all ages and both sexes were selected. Questionnaires were administered to each participant and blood samples collected was labeled, analyzed using RDT kits and recorded properly to avoid mix up.

Sampling Site

For the purpose of this research, Makurdi main town was divided into four sampling sites, comprising of North bank, Ankpa Ward, Wadata and High/level. In these locations at least three major streets was selected as sampling sites. In Ogbadibo local government area, Orokam district was used as the sampling site comprising of Adum Oko, Orokam Center, Uture and Ipole Ako, households were selected randomly.

Study Design and Sampling

Two types of data were collected.

1. Collection of information on the demographic, geographical, socioeconomic, knowledge, attitude and practice of participants using structured questionnaires.
2. Collection of information on malaria prevalence using rapid diagnostic technique.

Use of Questionnaires

Structured questionnaires were used to collect information about the socioeconomic and geographical location of each respondent. In case of infants, their mother or person that brought them was interviewed. The questionnaire was administered to each participant and was collected back immediately to ensure 100% returns. Included in the questionnaire were variables such as age, sex, education, occupation, etc as seen in Appendix.

Parasitological Technique

The Cassette Rapid diagnostic Test was employed in the diagnosis of malaria antigen using the finger prick blood collection method.

Principle of the Cassette Malaria Rapid Diagnostic Test (RDT)

- Malaria Rapid Diagnostic Tests are qualitative immunochromatographic lateral flow tests in cassette that detects malaria antigen in peripheral blood. (Cheesbrough, 2005).
- Malaria antigen from a lysed blood sample is reacted with anti-malaria monoclonal antibody conjugated to colloidal gold (pink) particles.
- The antigen-antibody colloidal gold complex migrates along the nitrocellulose membrane where it becomes bound (captured) by a line of specific monoclonal antibody, producing a pink colour in the test result area. This line can be seen after a washing buffer has removed the background hemoglobin. (Cheesbrough, 2005).

Sample Collection

The sample collected for this research is a peripheral blood and the method of collection is the finger prick method as described by (Cheesbrough, 2005).

Materials

The Cassette malaria Rapid Diagnostic Test (RDT) kit containing Blood transfer device and Running buffer. Other essential ancillary commodities include: Lancet, Alcohol swabs, Gloves, Swabs and sharps disposal containers, Biohazard bags.

Procedures

The packet was opened and the Test, Capillary, Desk count sachet removed. The participant's name was written on the test to avoid mix up. Alcohol swab was opened, taking the fourth finger of the participant's left hand; the finger was cleaned with alcohol swab and allowed to dry before pricking. Lancet was opened and the participant's finger pricked to get a drop of blood. The lancet was not allowed to touch anything before using. The lancet was disposed in the sharps disposal container immediately. The capillary tube provided was then used to collect the blood. Using the capillary tube, the blood was dropped into the square hole marked "A". The capillary tube was then discarded into the sharp's container. Buffer was added into the round hole marked "B". The test was then ready to be read after 15 minutes.

How to read the result

Positive: A line near letter "C" and a line near letter "T" mean the patient is positive for malaria.

Negative: A line near "C" and no line near "T" mean the patient is negative for malaria.

Invalid result: No line near "C" and one or no line near letter "T" mean the test is invalid and has to be repeated.

Vector study

Collection of Indoor biting and resting adult mosquitoes

Indoor biting and resting adult mosquitoes were collected from different randomly selected houses in each study area (urban and rural) using pyrethrum (insecticide) knockdown collection techniques (PKC). One room was selected from each household based on the occupant's cooperation. Cloth sheets were used to cover the floor of each room in order to collect dead or weak mosquitoes.

The clothes were laid from wall to wall and were made to overlap with each other at the centre of the room to avoid escape of falling mosquitoes. Open eaves were properly covered where present and the windows and doors were properly shut and the whole room sprayed with Insecticide aerosol commonly available in the local markets. After 20 minutes of fleeting each room, the doors and windows were opened and the cloths were folded starting from edges to ensure that all fallen mosquitoes concentrated at the centre. The mosquitoes were then taken to the open space where they were opened and all collected into vials.

Identification and Scoring of Mosquitoes

Identification and scoring of mosquito was done microscopically with the aid of the taxonomic keys from Gillies and Coetzee (1987) and Gillies and De Meillon (1968) was used to identify Anopheline and Culicine mosquitoes to species level.

Identification was based on gross external morphology, appearance of the antennae, palps, proboscis, thorax, terminal abdominal segments, wings and hind legs colour and striations on the body by comparing mosquito parts and identification of features with published keys.

Statistical analysis

The data were pooled across the four urban areas in Makurdi (Wadata, North bank, High level and Ankpa ward) and four rural areas in Orokam (Orokam center, Uture, Adum oko and Ipole ako), so as to yield urban and rural data sets which were then subjected to statistical analysis. Chi square was used to test for significant differences at 0.05 Level of significance.

Where the chi-square calculated is greater than the chi-square tabulated variables are considered as statistically significant. Prevalence rate was calculated using simple percentage.

III. Results

A total of 384 individuals took part in the research, out of which 200 are from urban area (Makurdi) and 184 from rural area (Orokam). Of the 200 persons examined in urban area, 58(29.0%) were positive for malaria parasite while 64(34.7%) were infected in the rural area (Table 1).

The gender specific infection rate showed that males had the higher infection rate 36.6% than females 27.9% as shown in table 2. The study according to age showed that age group 1-5 years had the highest infection rate 41.2% followed by 6-10 with infection rate of 38.9% (Table 3).

Structured questionnaires were administered to assess the malaria related knowledge. The reason for non-ownership and non-usage of insecticide treated nets are summarized in table 4. Reason why some don't own ITNs 80(20.8%) complained of inaccessibility while 145(37.7%) said theirs are damaged. 120(31.2%) cited inconvenience while 27.6% cited causes heat as their reason for non-usage. Table 5 assessed their knowledge on the mode of action of ITNs in preventing malaria transmission, majority 158(41.1%) responded that it serves as a physical barrier while other 131(34.1%) says it kill mosquito.

The knowledge, attitude and perception on the mode of transmission, control strategy and best malaria remedy are summarized in table 6. (91.4%) responded that malaria is transmitted by mosquito bites, (51.5%) cited insecticide spray as their preferred means of mosquito control. The malaria management practice showed that 65.3% uses drugs while 32.2% uses herbs. Table 7 shows prevalence of malaria in relation to ITNs ownership and it was observed that 26.5% of those that reported ownership were positive for malaria parasite while 35.7% of those that reported non-ownership were positive. 16.3% of those that reported usage of ITNs were positive for malaria infection while 35.3% that reported non-usage were infected (Table 8). The study also revealed that most of the respondents 60.42% acquired their ITNs through free distribution while 23.18% obtained theirs from market/clinic (Figure 8).

The abundance and distribution of mosquito species varied in the various towns and in both urban and rural areas. Urban area had a greater number of mosquito caught in rooms (94) and had a room density of (2.3) against rural area (52) with room density of (1.6). Of the 146 mosquitoes caught majority were *Culex quinquefasciatus* 57(39.0%) followed by *Aedes aegypti* 40(27.3%) and *Anopheles gambiae* 35(23.9%) as shown in table 9.

Table 1: Prevalence of malaria in the study area.

Location	No. Examined	No. Infected (%)
Urban Areas		
High level	50	8 (16.0)
Wadata	50	21 (42.0)
North Bank	50	17 (34.0)
Ankpa Ward	50	12(24.0)
Sub-total Urban	200	58 (29.0)
Rural Areas		
Adum Oko	50	18 (36.0)
Uture	50	16 (32.0)
Orokam Center	45	16 (35.5)
Ipole Ako	39	14 (35.8)
Sub-total Rural	184	64 (34.7)
Grand Total	384	122 (31.7)

(X^2 calc = 1.733, < X^2 tab = 3.84, df = 1, P > 0.05)

Table 2: Prevalence of malaria according to sex

Gender	No. Tested	No. Infected (%)
Male	169	62 (36.6)
Female	215	60 (27.9)
Total	384	122 (31.7)

(X^2 Calc = 3.118, < X^2 tab = 3.841, df = 1, P > 0.05)

Table 3: Prevalence of malaria in relation to age groups in the study area.

Age Group	Urban Areas		Rural Areas		Total	
	No. Examined	No. Infected(%)	No. Examined	No. Infected(%)	No. Examined	No. Infected(%)
1-5	32	13(40.6)	31	13(41.9)	63	26(41.2)
6-10	34	11(32.3)	25	12(48.0)	59	23(38.9)
11-15	23	5(21.7)	30	7(23.3)	53	12(22.6)
16-20	25	7(28.0)	19	6(31.5)	44	13(29.5)
21-25	22	6(27.2)	28	7(25.0)	50	13(26.0)
26-30	21	4(19.0)	14	6(42.8)	35	10(28.5)
31-35	13	5(38.4)	15	5(33.3)	28	10(35.7)
36-40	17	4(23.5)	12	4(33.3)	29	8(27.5)
41-above	13	3(23.0)	10	4(40.0)	23	7(30.4)
Total	200	58(29.0)	184	64(34.7)	384	122(31.7)

Table 4: Showing reasons for Non-ownership and Non-usage of ITNs in the study area.

	URBAN (Makurdi) (%)	RURAL (Orokam) (%)	TOTAL (%)
REASON FOR NON-OWNERSHIP			
Inaccessibility/Don't know where to buy.	36(18.0)	44(23.9)	80(20.8)
Too expensive/high cost.	17(8.5)	14(7.4)	31(8.0)
Do not know about ITNs.	27(13.5)	22(11.9)	49(12.7)
Damaged.	81(40.5)	64(34.7)	145(37.7)
Prefer other mosquito control strategies.	39(19.5)	40(21.7)	79(20.5)
REASON FOR NON-USAGE			
Inconvenience/sleeplessness	74(37.0)	46(25.0)	120(31.2)
Allergic to ITN	14(7.0)	28(15.2)	42(10.9)
Causes heat	58(29.0)	48(26.0)	106(27.6)
Ineffective	11(5.5)	12(6.5)	23(5.9)
It is meant for the dead	1(0.5)	8(4.3)	9(2.3)
No space to hang it	41(20.3)	37(20.1)	78(20.3)
No specific reason (ignorance)	1(0.5)	5(2.7)	6(1.5)
TOTAL	200	184	384

Table 5: Assessment of the Knowledge on the Mode of Action of ITNs in preventing Malaria Transmission.

RESPONSES	Urban (Makurdi) (%)	Rural (Orokam) (%)	TOTAL (%)
Physical barrier	81 (40.5)	77(41.8)	158(41.1)
Kills mosquito	70(35.0)	61(33.1)	131(34.1)
Irritates mosquito	39(19.5)	20(10.8)	59(15.3)
Do not know	10(5.0)	26(14.1)	36(9.3)
TOTAL	200	184	384

Table 6: KAP on the mode of transmission, control strategy and best malaria remedy

VARIABLE	Urban (Makurdi) (%)	Rural (Orokam) (%)	TOTAL (%)
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MODE OF TRANSMISSION

Epidemiology of Malaria In An Urban And A Rural Area Of Benue State Of Nigeria

Mosquito Bite	193(96.6)	158(85.8)	351(91.4)
Body contact with Infected Person	1(0.5)	3(1.6)	4(1.0)
Respiratory Route	0(0.0)	3(1.6)	3(0.7)
Witchcraft/Charm	3(1.5)	11(5.9)	14(3.6)
Don't Know	3(1.5)	9(4.8)	12(3.1)
MOSQUITO CONTROL STRATEGY			
Insecticide spray	101(50.5)	97(52.7)	198(51.5)
Clear all Stagnant Water	10(5.0)	8(4.3)	18(4.6)
Mosquito Coil	13(6.5)	24(13.0)	37(9.6)
Apply mosquito repellent cream	12(6.0)	2(1.0)	14(3.6)
Windows And Door Nets	13(6.5)	10(5.4)	23(5.9)
Insecticide Treated Nets (ITNs)	51(25.5)	43(23.3)	94(24.4)
BEST MALARIA REMEDY			
Drugs	132(66.0)	119(64.6)	251(65.3)
Traditional healers	2(1.0)	7(3.8)	9(2.3)
Herbs	66(33.0)	58(31.5)	124(32.2)
TOTAL	200	184	384

Table 7: Showing Prevalence of Malaria in Relation to ITN ownership in the study areas.

ITN Ownership	Urban (Makurdi) (%)		Rural (Orokam) (%)	Total (%)		
	No. of Respondents	Number Positive	No. of Respondents	Number Positive	Number of Respondents	Number Positive
YES	87(43.5)	20(22.9)	79 (42.9)	24(30.3)	166(43.2)	44(26.5)
NO	113(56.5)	38(28.5)	105(57.0)	40(38.0)	218(56.7)	78(35.7)
TOTAL	200	58(29.0)	184	64(34.7)	384	122(31.7)

(X^2 calc = 3.963 > X^2 tab = 3.841. df=1)

Table 8: Showing prevalence of malaria in relation to ITN Usage in the study area

ITN Usage	Urban (Makurdi) (%)		Rural(Orokam)(%)	Total (%)		
	Number examined	Number Positive	Number examined	Number positive	Number examined	Number positive
Every night (consistently)	30	4(13.3)	25	5(20.0)	55	9(16.3)
A few times (inconsistent)	46	16(34.7)	57	17(29.8)	103	33(32.0)
Never	124	38(30.6)	102	42(41.1)	226	80(35.3)
Total	200	58(29.0)	184	64(34.7)	384	122(31.7)

(X^2 Calc = 6.75, > X^2 = 5.99, df = 2, P < 0.05)

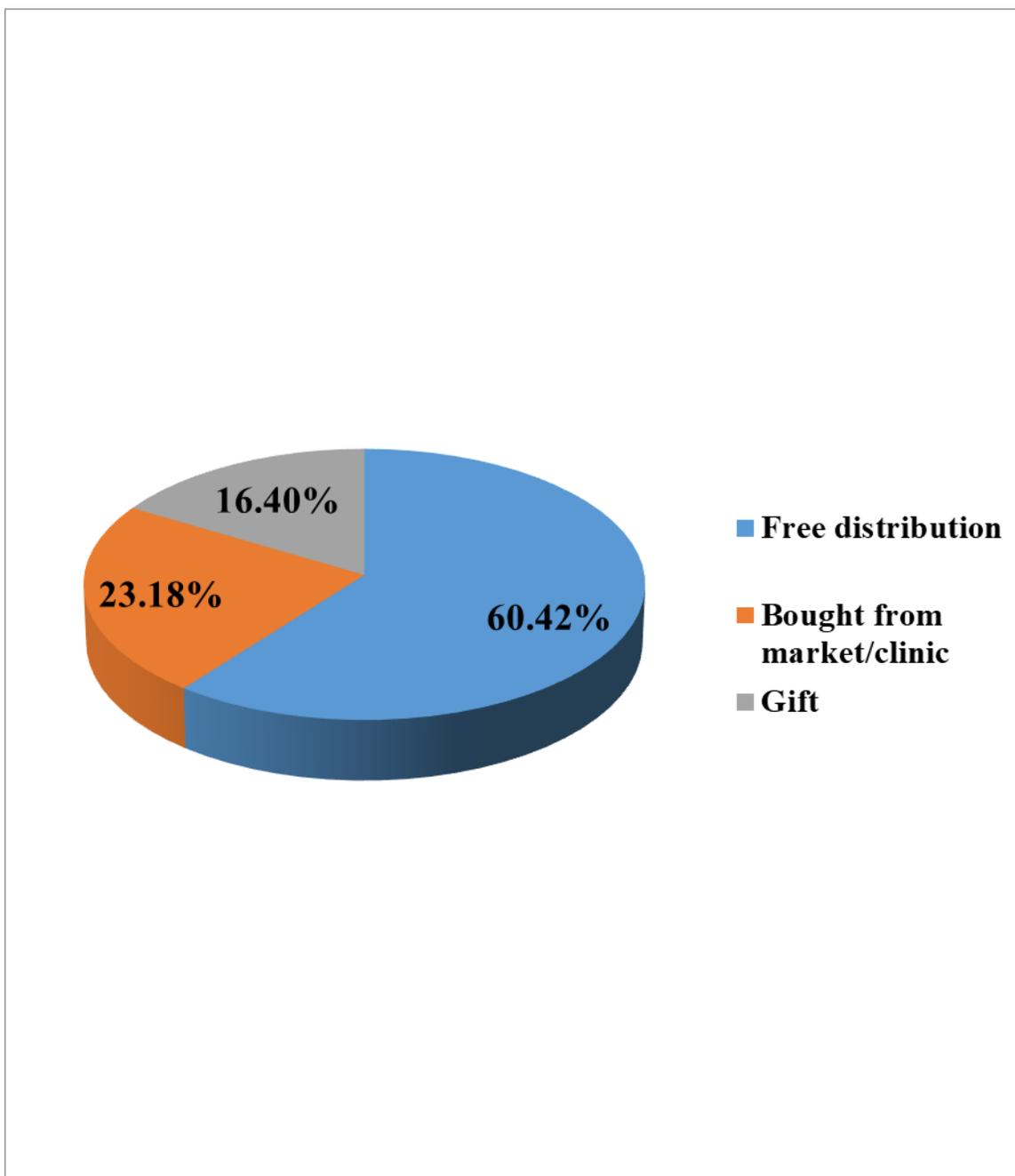


Figure 9: Respondent's source of ITNs

Table 9: Mosquito species collected from the study area

Location	Mosquito species	No. collected	Room Density
Urban			
High Level	<i>Culex quinquefasciatus</i>	8	0.8
	<i>Aedes aegypti</i>	6	0.6
	<i>Anopheles gambiae</i>	3	0.3
	<i>Anopheles funestus</i>	-	-
	Total	17	1.7
Wadata	<i>Culex quinquefasciatus</i>	12	1.2
	<i>Aedes aegypti</i>	7	0.7
	<i>Anopheles gambiae</i>	7	0.7
	<i>Anopheles funestus</i>	4	0.4
	Total	30	3.0
North Bank	<i>Culex quinquefasciatus</i>	10	1.0
	<i>Aedes aegypti</i>	7	0.7

	<i>Anopheles gambiae</i>	6	0.6
	<i>Anopheles funestus</i>	3	0.3
	Total	26	2.6
Ankpa Ward	<i>Culex quinquefasciatus</i>	8	0.8
	<i>Aedes aegypti</i>	6	0.6
	<i>Anopheles gambiae</i>	6	0.6
	<i>Anopheles funestus</i>	1	0.1
	Total	21	2.1
Urban Sub Total	<i>Culex quinquefasciatus</i>	38(40.4%)	0.9
	<i>Aedes aegypti</i>	26(27.6%)	0.7
	<i>Anopheles gambiae</i>	22(23.4%)	0.5
	<i>Anopheles funestus</i>	8(8.5%)	0.2
	Total	94(100%)	2.3
Rural			
Adum Oke	<i>Culex quinquefasciatus</i>	6	0.6
	<i>Aedes aegypti</i>	3	0.3
	<i>Anopheles gambiae</i>	4	0.4
	<i>Anopheles funestus</i>	2	0.2
	Total	15	1.5
Utire	<i>Culex quinquefasciatus</i>	5	0.5
	<i>Aedes aegypti</i>	5	0.5
	<i>Anopheles gambiae</i>	3	0.3
	<i>Anopheles funestus</i>	-	-
	Total	13	1.3
Orokam Center	<i>Culex species</i>	4	0.4
	<i>Aedes aegypti</i>	4	0.4
	<i>Anopheles gambiae</i>	3	0.3
	<i>Anopheles funestus</i>	1	0.1
	Total	12	1.2
Ipole Ako	<i>Culex quinquefasciatus</i>	4	0.4
	<i>Aedes aegypti</i>	2	0.2
	<i>Anopheles gambiae</i>	3	0.3
	<i>Anopheles funestus</i>	3	0.3
	Total	12	1.2
Rural Sub Total	<i>Culex quinquefasciatus</i>	19(36.5%)	0.4
	<i>Aedes aegypti</i>	14(26.9%)	0.3
	<i>Anopheles gambiae</i>	25(25.0%)	0.3
	<i>Anopheles funestus</i>	6(11.5%)	0.1
	Total	52(100%)	1.3
Grand Total	<i>Culex quinquefasciatus</i>	57(39.0%)	0.6
	<i>Aedes aegypti</i>	40(27.3%)	0.5
	<i>Anopheles gambiae</i>	35(23.9%)	0.4
	<i>Anopheles funestus</i>	14(9.5%)	0.1
	Total	146(100%)	1.6

IV. Discussion

Result from this study showed that malaria is endemic in both Makurdi Township and Orokam village in Ogbadibo Local government area of Benue State. This is still a major health issue in these areas. This also correlates with Agomo *et al* (2009), Okeke *et al* (2006), WHO (2005, 2006, 2009) and FMH (2005) that malaria is both stable and endemic in Nigeria.

The overall prevalence of plasmodium infection in the study areas (31.7%) is lower than some reported results such as Ojiezeh *et al* (2000) who reported 71.2% in Southwest Nigeria, Nwosu *et al* (2010) who reported 86.7% in Ohaji, Imo State, Ukpai and Ajoku(2001) reported 85.5% in Okigwe and 75.00% in Owerri both in Imo state, 73.30% was reported by Oparaocha, 2003 in Ikwuono Abia State, Adefioye *et al* (2007) reported 72% prevalence rate in Oshogbo and 93.33% in Abia and 80.39% in Umuahia by Kalu *et al.*, 2012. Other reports are those of Olasehinde *et al* (2015) who reported 61.1% in South western Nigeria, Iwuora (2012) who reported 64.9% in Anambra State and 64.0% as reported by Nmadu *et al* (2015). The result however correlate some reports such as those of Bawa *et al* (2014) who reported incidence rate of 36.5% in Katsina State, Usip and Udofia (2010) reported 49.3% prevalence rate in Uyo and 46% by Umeaneato *et al* (2006) in Nnewi.

The comparative study between the various location shows that malaria prevalence was higher in the rural areas (34.7%) than in urban areas (29.0%). This may be due to ready availability of prevention and control tools in urban areas such as insecticide treated nets, Insecticide spray, knowledge of malaria and its prevention. The high prevalence of malaria in urban areas may be due to the extent in urbanization, availability of breeding places for malaria vectors, overcrowding and the behavioural attitude of the inhabitants of the areas among others. These is according to the reports that there has been marked increase in the number and size of towns and cities in many developing countries without corresponding increase in such services such as proper

sanitation and good drainages that inhibit the breeding of vectors of malaria (Fonterille and Simard, 2004). However, the difference in this case was not significant (X^2 calc = 1.733, $< X^2$ tab = 3.84, df = 1, P > 0.05).

Our study showed that males had higher malaria prevalence than females. This agrees with reports made by Nmadu *et al* (2015) and Abdullah *et al* (2009). According to Krogstad (1996) females are more immune to parasitic diseases and this is due to genetic and hormonal factors. The higher rate of prevalence could also be due to the fact that males are more engaged in out-door activities which make them more vulnerable to bites from infective mosquitoes as compared to the female counterparts.

The study reported higher prevalence rate of plasmodium among children of age group 1-5 and 6-10 years which corresponds with earlier studies by WHO, 2005, Nmadu *et al* (2015), Umar and Hassan (2001) and Olasehinde *et al* (2015) who reported 70.80% in children 1-5 years. This may be due to the fact that at that age, their immunity to parasitic infections has not been developed fully. However it has been established that residual immunity derived from the mother could be very effective in younger children but environmental conditions and inability to ward off mosquito attacks predispose them to malaria attack.

The study also showed that four major species of mosquitoes were recovered from the study areas; which are the *Culex quinquefasciatus*, *Aedes aegypti*, *Anopheles funestus* and *Anopheles gambiae*. Species of mosquitoes recovered in the study has also been reported in some studies such as Adeleke, 2008, Onyido *et al*, 2009 and Okogun *et al* 2005. The finding of *Anopheles species* in the study areas is of great importance because they are established vectors of malaria in Nigeria (Adeleke, 2008). *Culex species* are known vectors of bancroftian filariasis and *Aedes species* are proven vectors of arboviruses and yellow fever.

The report showed that mosquitoes recovered from the urban areas were more than those recovered from the rural areas. The presence of more mosquitoes in urban areas could be due to the fact that most urban areas of developing countries have poor housing, lack proper sanitation and lack proper drainage of surface water which could likely increase vector breeding and human vector contact and thus pose exclusive challenges to malaria control (UN, 2002; World population, 2006; Martens *et al*, 2000).

Insecticide treated nets (ITNs) is found to be one of the most effective prevention material for malaria. The study showed a 43.2% ITNs ownership which is higher than earlier report such as the Nigerian Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) (2003) which reported 12% of bed net ownership and 2% ITNs in Nigerian households as at 2003. In 2008, NDHS reported an increase of bed net ownership to 17% and ITNs ownership increased to 8%. FMH in 2003 reported 11.8% ITNs ownership. This increment in ITNs ownership as reported in this study may be due to the fact that there has been increased awareness through radio and television jingles. Also there has been free ITNs distribution by government and different Non-governmental organisation in the state and across the nation, an exercise which is going on. The report also showed a slight difference in net ownership between the various locations; urban (43.5%) while rural (42.9%). The difference in ownership could be because urban areas have more health care facilities, easy access and have more acceptability rate due to awareness than rural areas.

Even though free net had been distributed in the study areas, usage is still relatively low. Major reasons for non-usage include; harsh weather, irritation while using it, inconvenience, lack of space and ignorance. These relates with Noor *et al* 2006, Alaii *et al* (2003) and Craig *et al* (1999).

The result also showed that 26.5% of people that reported ownership ITNs had malaria while 16.3% of those that reported usage of ITNs every night had malaria parasite. This level of prevalence may be due to improper usage of the nets or they were being exposed to infectious bite during the day's activities.

The result from the study also revealed that high percentage of the respondents (91.4%) attributed malaria to mosquito bite. Knowledge on mode of transmission varies reasonably among age groups, different educational level and socio status. This agrees with Bawa *et al* (2014) which reported 93.4% respondents' knowledge of malaria transmission.

V. Conclusion

This study revealed the prevalence of malaria in Makurdi and Orokam, which shows that malaria is endemic and stable in Nigeria with seasonal variation in different zones of the country and is a major cause of morbidity and mortality and particularly affects children under 5 years. The study also shows that insecticide treated nets are reliable and proven means of malaria prevention and more awareness has to be created about its proper usage and benefit. Continuous monitoring of the situation in Benue state and other parts of the country is needed to have a clear picture of the impact of intervention programs carried out so far. The findings also provides base-line information for evidence based planning and implementation of malaria control activities in the state by government, their agencies and nongovernmental organization. The vector study shows a high amount of *culex species* which can be very useful in vector control.

VI. Recommendations

1. Greater attention should be paid to population living in rural areas, towns and villages where there are no secondary or specialize health care facilities. Such areas should be designated as high priority targets for malaria intervention and control programs. These efforts should be doubled during the malaria transmission season which coincides with the rainy season. Government should also ensure that these communities have access to quality and affordable ACTs considering it is currently the most potent weapon against malaria.
2. Public health education campaign for mothers and health care givers should be given to create awareness that may lead to reduction of vectors of malaria infection and control of the disease especially in young children.
3. More free or subsidized insecticide treated nets should be made available to the general public.
4. Children should be treated with anti-malaria drugs every 3 months to prevent malaria and to kill (if any) the early stage of malaria parasite.

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