

Malaria Vector Control in a Rural Community in Cameroon: Factors Influencing Mosquito Bed Net Use in Households

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Abstract:

Insecticide-treated bed nets (ITNs) are effective in preventing malaria, but their impact is limited if people do not use them. Research indicates that despite high ITN ownership, usage is often low and influenced by various factors that differ between communities. This study investigated the factors affecting ITN use in households within a rural community in Cameroon. A cross-sectional study, involving 580 households from 30 locations, was conducted using questionnaires based on the Malaria Indicator Survey. Data analysis revealed that ITN ownership was high at 92.6%, but actual usage was only 41.2%. ITN use was particularly low among children aged 5-15 years, educated individuals, with less than one ITN for two persons. White-colored ITNs were also less frequently used. The study highlighted a significant gap between ITN ownership and usage in this malaria-endemic area, with usage influenced by age, education level, net color, and household ITN availability. To increase ITN use, efforts could focus on targeting the under protected 5-15 age group and educated individuals by promoting school-based programs that encourage proper ITN use.