

Clinical signs and symptoms of *P. falciparum* malaria infection (patent and sub-patent) in pregnant women living in an area of high seasonal transmission

Marc C Tahita

Research Institute for Health Sciences, Burkina Faso

Background: Malaria in pregnancy is a major public health problem in endemic countries. However, there is a paucity of data on the signs and symptoms of clinical malaria among pregnant women. This study aimed at documenting the clinical presentation of malaria among pregnant women.

Methods: Six hundred pregnant women attending the maternity clinic of Nanoro District Hospital, Burkina Faso, were recruited, 200 with suspected clinical malaria and 400 as controls. Cases were matched by gestational age and parity with controls. Signs and symptoms were collected and a blood sample taken for rapid diagnostic test, microscopy and hemoglobin measurement. A multivariate model was used to assess the predictive value of signs and symptoms for malaria infection.

Results: The overall prevalence of malaria was 42.6%

(256/600) while anemia was found in 60.8% (365/600) women. Nearly half (49.5%) cases and 39.5% controls had a malaria infection. The most common signs and symptoms among the cases were fever (36%, 72/200), history of fever (29%, 58/200) and headache (52%, 104/200). The positive predictive value for fever was 53% (95%CI: 41-64), history of fever 58% (95%CI: 37-63) and headache 51% (95%CI: 41-61).

Conclusion: Signs and symptoms suggestive of malaria are frequent among pregnant women living in areas of intense transmission. Common malaria symptoms cannot identify all infected women. For a better management of malaria in pregnancy, active screening to early detect and treat malaria infection should be performed on all pregnant women attending a health facility

e: marctahita@yahoo.fr