

➤ ***Intermittent Preventive Treatment of Malaria in Pregnancy: Assessing the New Implementation Strategy in Ghana***

Malaria is a mosquito borne parasitic infection with over 90 percent of infections due to Plasmodium falciparum species in high transmission areas. In sub-Saharan Africa, it represents the greatest public health challenge and is recognized as a major obstacle to economic development. In this region, the most susceptible subpopulation groups are pregnant women and children under five years. As such, a coordinated multi-lateral effort to reduce the burden of disease and death on the most vulnerable populations has been increasingly prioritized by policy makers and national governments in the last decade under the leadership of the World Health Organization (WHO). In order to reduce the major risks of adverse outcomes to the mother, her fetus and the neonate, the WHO therefore currently recommends a package of interventions for controlling malaria during pregnancy in areas with stable transmission of Plasmodium falciparum, which includes the use of insecticide treated nets (ITNs), the administration during pregnancy of at least 2 doses of intermittent preventive treatment (IPTp) with sulfadoxine-pyrimethamine (SP) after quickening and effective case management of malaria. Nonetheless, according to the WHO's Evidence Review Group (ERG), preliminary data from recent observational studies in Malawi, the first country where IPTp-SP was implemented in 1993 suggest reduced effectiveness of SP for IPTp.. Ghana currently implements the WHO IPTp recommendations and malaria still remains the single most important reason for hospital visitation as well as primary cause of hospitalization. In this research,

Prof. Fobil and his team Prof. Isabella Quakyi, Prof. Ndam, Dr. Bosompim (PI) conducted an interdisciplinary research on the implementation of IPTp, including the recent amendment to it in Ghana and the overall aim is to assess the effects IPTp, nutritional factors and environmental exposures have on the mother, fetus, pregnancy outcomes and infant health outcomes in Ghana in order to inform national policy as well as strengthen existing health interventions and help fashion new ones. This was funded by French Agency for International Technical Expertise, Global Fund, 5% Initiative with an amount of USD263, 000.00