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India shows decline in malaria deaths: WHO report

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11 highest malaria burden countries largely held the line against malaria during the pandemic: India amongst them, says WHO World Malaria Report 2022



The World Health Organisation (WHO) has launched the 2022 edition of its annual World Malaria Report, emphasising the cumulative impacts the prolonged pandemic continued to weigh on the economies and health systems of malaria-endemic countries across the globe.

As per the report, there were an estimated 247 million malaria cases recorded in 2021 in 84 malaria endemic countries. However, the rate of increase in malaria cases was slower than that observed between 2019-2020, when the spike in the rate was associated with the sudden disruptions to health service delivery brought on by the pandemic.

The report states that the case incidence remained largely similar in 2020 and 2021. The WHO African Region continued to account for the largest burden globally, with 4 nations in the region responsible for over half of all malaria deaths.

Over the past 2 decades, the WHO South-East Asia Region displayed a reducing trend in both the malaria cases and associated deaths – cases reduced by 76%, from 22.8 million in 2000 to about 5.4 million in 2021.

As per the report, the WHO South-East Asia Region accounted for about 2% of the burden of malaria cases globally, out of which, India was responsible for 79% of cases. The death associated with malaria remained largely similar over the past 3 years, with India accounting for 82.4% of all malaria deaths in the WHO South-East Asia Region in 2021. Positively, India is among the 5 HBHI (*High burden to high impact)* nations to showcase showed a decline in deaths, although their contributions to the malaria burden within HBHI countries is still substantial.

Pratik Kumar, Country Director, Malaria No More India stated, “WHO estimates likely differ from official government figures on account of the majority of cases being diagnosed and treated in the private health sector. Identifying and integrating mechanisms to enforce the notifiable status of malaria and include data from private health sector is imminent to assess the true disease burden of our country. Estimating the true disease burden is one of the most fundamental steps that needs to be taken to fulfil our nation’s ambitious goal and achieve our Prime Minister’s vision of a malaria free country by 2030.”