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Use RDT kit to check for malaria parasites - experts

By Correspondent
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MEDICAL laboratories have been urged to use Rapid Diagnostic Test (RDT) kit to confirm presence of malaria parasites, instead of only depending on the use of microscope which happens to be challenging laboratory attendants in the country.

The call was made yesterday in Dar es Salaam by IFAKARA Health Institute (IHI) Research Scientist (Clinical Epidemiologist), Abdunoor Mulokozi in an exclusive interview with The Guardian.

Mulokozi said it has been discovered that the majority of laboratories personnel have little knowledge on the use of microscopes hence sometime failing to detect malaria parasites through microscopes, therefore ending up assuming the presence of the parasites in patients' bodies judging from the symptoms and administer anti malarias despite the microscope having failed to

detect the parasite.

Due to such incidents, Mulokozi said that they have discovered that there is a need for both malaria test equipment to be used so that whenever one fails the other one can be used to instead.

"Not every fever is malaria, people should understand this...other fevers are caused by different viruses, so people should not take anti-malarias once laboratory results show that no malaria parasite was found," he said.

"The tendency of taking anti-malarias without actually having malaria has left many people living with chronic malaria," he added.

Mulokozi called on all private dispensaries to have RDT so as to be sure of the health services they provide, and urged the public to accept results from RDT.

He further added that in order to have good health services in the country all health servants should adhere to the National Malaria Control Program (NMCP) guidelines whenever

providing health services to the people.

The NMCP has a guideline on malaria treatment whereby the proposed anti-malaria is Dihydroartemisinin/piperazine (DHA/PQP) and Quinine injection whereas mono therapies are not advised for treatment by the ministry of health and social welfare.

Among the mono therapies not advised are Amodiaquine, Chloroquine, Seftrine, Cotrimoxazole and Sulfadoxine Pymethothine.

For his part, IHI Communication Officer, Mbarwa Kivuyo informed that the malaria vaccine RTSS/AS02D is acceptable, safe and tolerable.

Kivuyo said the malaria vaccine test is on phase 3 whereby the test has covered seven countries with 11 sites, whereby Tanzania has two sites of Ifakara and NIMR in Korogwe.

Among other countries where phase three test is taking place are Kenya in Kisumu, Siaya, and Kilifi; Msumbiji, Ghana, Malawi.