

Malaria and Time Poverty in a Rural Nigeria: A Gender Analysis

Olufunke Alaba
University of Cape Town

O.A. Saliu
National Open University of Nigeria

Malaria remains one of the greatest sources of threat to family welfare in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). Incidences of malaria in endemic areas have major implications for household economy, natural schedule of activities and interactions within the household system. An important element of cost of malaria to families apart from the out of pocket cost is time spent of care-giving to the sick, by female members of the households in particular. The study assesses the time-use dynamics within the households in which at least one individual experienced an episode of malaria attack, which was clinically confirmed during the survey.

A 24 hours time-use diary was used to capture time-use pattern of 1560 individuals in 300 households that experienced at least a case of clinically confirmed malaria in rural Western Nigeria. Structured household questionnaires were administered to elicit socioeconomic and demographic information. The households were visited within 3 to 17 days after the first medical confirmation of malaria. Activities were grouped into three: System of National Accounts (SNA) productive activities; NON-SNA productive activities and NON-productive activities. SNA activities include marketable work; Non-SNA and Non productive activities include care-giving and personal care respectively.

The analysis extends the knowledge regarding the adverse effect of malaria on households. It is clear that malaria pushes the household to tighter budget, income and time constraint, all of which have a serious implication on welfare and poverty of the household. The results show a far reaching implication for female members of the household as the main caregivers in the families. At the peak of malaria attack, female household members shift from SNA-productive activities considerably to NON_SNA productive activities which include care-giving with an average of not less than 3 hours a day. This adverse effect extends to non-productive activities like leisure and resting which reduced substantially compared to the male members of the households.

Key words: Malaria, time-use, SNA activities