



# Vanuatu Malaria Bulletin

January – March Quarter 2011

Newsletter Date: 1 June 2011

## Special points of interest:

- Vanuatu has world class test available at 86% of aid posts, dispensaries, health centres and hospitals to diagnose malaria
- Effective treatment is available for people with confirmed malaria
- NETPROTECT bed nets prevent malaria and are available free of charge

## Inside this issue:

770 confirmed malaria cases in first quarter 2011 **1**

95% of confirmed cases get world class treatment **2**

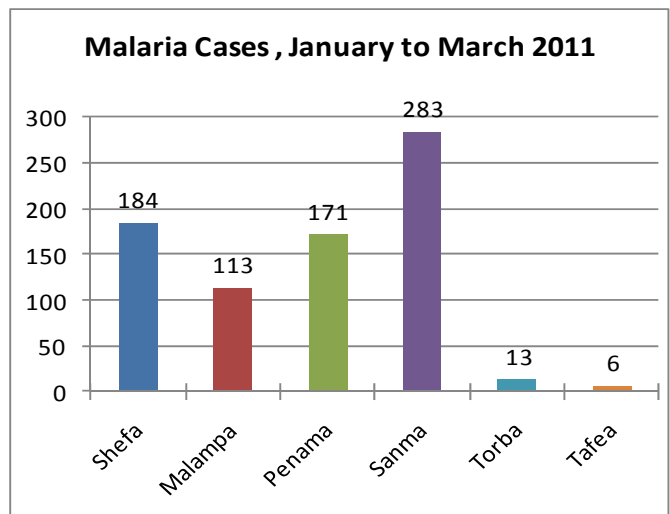
91,281 households receive NETPROTECT **2**

Published by National Vector Borne Disease Control Program, Ministry of Health, Vanuatu

## New Test Confirms 770 Malaria Cases

From January to March of this year, 770 people tested positive for malaria in Vanuatu. The diagnoses were confirmed using the new Rapid Diagnostic Test (RDT) that is being used in aid posts, dispensaries, health centres and hospitals throughout the country. With the new test the results are available within just 15 minutes.

Sanma reported more cases than other provinces (283 cases) although Shefa and Penama each had close to 200 cases. Relatively few cases were reported from Torba and Tafea (13 and 6 cases respectively). The low number of cases reported from Torba may reflect its smaller population and/or smaller number of health facilities. The population of Tafea, on the other hand, is



comparable to the populations of Malampa and Penama and to a lesser extent Sanma. The low number of confirmed cases in Tafea is more likely related to the efforts that are being made to eliminate malaria from Tafea by 2014. In Tafea there

is a 'Malaria Elimination Committee' which is supported by chiefs from many villages. The MEC conducts activities to remind people about malaria and encourages everyone to adopt preventive behaviours.

## Students Become Malaria Advocates

Children in primary schools around Vanuatu are becoming advocates for prevention and control of malaria. 375 primary schools received a leaflet outlining activities that children can do in the classroom and at home.

Children will monitor use of mosquito nets by their fami-

lies at home over a 1-week period. They will also look for places where mosquitoes can lay eggs, such as pools of fresh or slightly salty water. Children are encouraged to talk to their parents and teachers about preventing malaria and reducing mosquito breeding sites around the home and village.

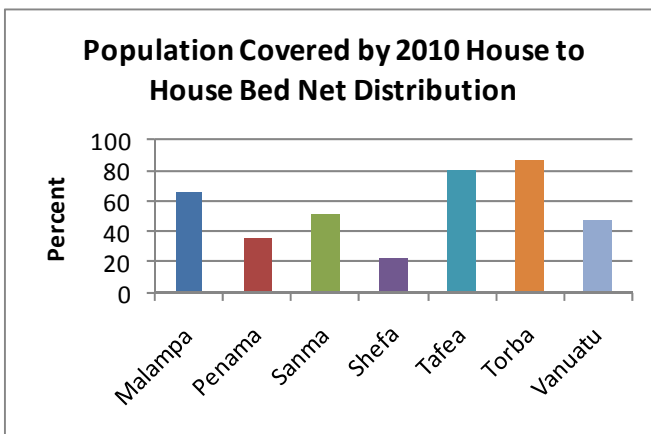




**Vanuatu Covered by 'NETPROTECT'**

'NetProtect' bed nets were distributed to 91,281 households in Vanuatu during 2010. These nets have insecticide incorporated into the fibers that repels and kills mosquitoes and other annoying insects. The insecticide is effective for at least 3 years. The nets will protect an estimated 114,645 people or 47% of Vanuatu's population. Nets were distributed by zones with enough nets given to each household to cover all regis-

Sleeping under an insecticide treated mosquito net is the best way to prevent malaria. Be sure to have enough nets for all he family.



tered sleeping places. Boarding schools were also given nets in 2010. Net distribution is ongoing and

zones that did not receive new nets in 2010 will be issued nets in the future. Use a bed net every night.

**Vanuatu  
Malaria Free**

**Keeping  
Vanuatu free of  
malaria is  
everyone's  
responsibility**

**New Malaria Treatment Gets the Tick**

Vanuatu has a new treatment for malaria called Coartem. Unlike some other treatments, Coartem has few side effects and is more effective because mosquitoes are not resistant to it. To maintain the effectiveness of the medicine it is vital that people take Coartem in accordance with the advice given by the health worker. The full course of

treatment must be taken over 3 days.

From January to March of 2011, across Vanuatu, 95% of people confirmed with malaria received Coartem. Health Workers are helping to control malaria by making sure almost everyone with confirmed malaria is given Coartem—the best malaria treatment available.



Tafea HIS Officer, Aron Tebi distributes NetProtect, on a house by house basis. 'Spending time with the community, sharing food, kava and stories really helps people to understand why it is important to use a bed net every night.' said Malaria Supervisor, Harry Iata.

**Cooperation Key to Success in Tafea**

Tafea Malaria Supervisor, Harry Iata, believes that understanding how malaria is transmitted and the effectiveness of bed nets for prevention is the key to getting communities to join the fight against malaria. Harry and his team distributed NetProtect nets to every household in Tafea in 2010. Before issuing the nets, the team explain malaria trans-

mission and how using nets benefits the community. The team found that communities readily accept bed nets if they are given a chance to talk about and discuss their own ideas and experiences of malaria first. Another key factor in the successful reduction of malaria in Tafea is good cooperation between the Malaria Team, the PHO and staff in health

centres and aid posts. Harry believes it may be possible to eliminate malaria in Tafea earlier than 2014 but said it partly depends on reducing malaria in other provinces. 'Inter-province travel is high especially between Tafea and Shefa. Three of the 6 cases of malaria in Tafea earlier this year were imported from other provinces' Harry said.