

**THE EXTENT OF USE OF INSECTICIDE TREATED NETS AND FACTORS  
AFFECTING THEIR USE AMONG PREGNANT WOMEN IN BOMET DISTRICT OF  
KENYA**

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## ABSTRACT

Pregnant women remain the main vulnerable group to malaria infection (particularly *Plasmodium falciparum* infection) among the adult population. The infection is mainly responsible for anemia during pregnancy and delivery of low birth weight babies. To reduce the intolerable burden of malaria in pregnancy, the Ministry of Health in Kenya, in accordance with the Abuja Declaration of African heads of state (April, 2000), is advocating use of insecticide treated nets (ITNs) by pregnant women, especially in epidemic prone areas. Reliable data on the extent of use and factors that may be influencing the use of this preventive measure are still scanty in Kenya. This study sought to determine the proportion of women using ITNs and factors influencing their use in one of the epidemic prone Districts in Kenya.

A cross-sectional study on the use of bed nets and factors that influence their use was conducted in 14 health facilities in Bomet District offering antenatal care services. Subjects were recruited from women seeking antenatal care (ANC) services. A total of 333 subjects were interviewed using a pre-tested questionnaire. Selection of subjects was done by systematic random sampling technique. Data were entered, cleaned and analyzed using Epi info computer software.

The study findings revealed that of the women interviewed (333), a total of 248 (74.5%) reported sleeping under insecticide treated nets. The mean age of the respondents was  $23.7 \pm 5.4$  years (range 15-45years). A significant proportion (69%) of those sleeping under the nets acquired them free from the Ministry of Health facilities. On the other hand, 85.9 % (N=73) of non-users said they were unable to afford them. A total of 275 (82.6%) of the respondents identified a mosquito transmitted parasite as the cause of malaria while the remaining identified other causes ranging from contaminated water, dirty environment and eating sugary or fatty food. Most of the respondents (97.9% N=326) supported the use of insecticide treated nets as malaria preventive

measure when one is pregnant. Lower parity (less than five previous pregnancies) was significantly associated with non-use of bed nets, whereas having positive attitude towards malaria prevention strategies in pregnancy and being older than 18 years was significantly associated with use of bed nets among the pregnant women.