

## Economic Cost of Malaria: A Threat to Household Income in Nigeria

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**Abstract :** Malaria remains one of the major killers of humans worldwide, threatening the lives of more than one-third of the world's population. Some people refers it to; a disease of poverty because it contributes towards national poverty through its impact on foreign direct investment, tourism, labour productivity, and trade. At the micro level, it may cause poverty through spending on health care, income losses, and premature deaths. Unfortunately, malaria is a disease that affects both low-income household and its high-income counterpart, but low-income households are still at greater risk because significant part of the available monthly income is dedicated to various preventive and treatment measures. The objective of this study is to estimate direct and indirect cost of malaria treatment in households in a section of South-South Region (Akwa Ibom State) of Nigeria. A cross-sectional study of Six Hundred and Forty (640) heads of households or any adult representative of households in three local government areas of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria from May 1-31, 2015 were ascertained through interviewer-administered questionnaire adapted from Nigerian Malaria Indicator Survey Report. The clustering technique was used to select 640 households with the help of Primary Health Care (PHC) house numbering system. Using exchange rate of 197 Naira/USD, result shows that direct cost of malaria treatment was 8,894.44 USD while the indirect cost of malaria treatment was 11,012.81 USD. Total cost of treatment made up of 44.7% direct cost and 55.3% indirect cost, with average direct cost of malaria treatment per household estimated at 20.6 USD and the average indirect cost of treatment per household estimated at 25.1 USD. Average total cost for each episode (888) of malaria was estimated at 22.4 USD. While at household level, the average total cost was estimated at 45.5 USD. From the average total cost, low-income households would spend 36% of monthly household income on treating malaria and the impact could be said to be catastrophic, compared to high-income households where only 1.2% of monthly household income is spent on malaria treatment. It could be concluded that the cost of malaria treatment is well beyond the means of households and given the reality of repeated bouts of malaria and its contribution to the impoverishment of households, there is a need for urgent action.

**Keywords :** direct cost, indirect cost, low income households, malaria

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