

New Partnership to Help Eliminate Complex and Persistent Malaria

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The Indonesia Ministry of Health, Universitas Gadjah Mada, University of Indonesia, Universitas Sumatera Utara, and Menzies School of Health Research (Menzies) are embarking upon an important new program to improve the management of patients with *Plasmodium vivax* malaria, a relapsing form of malaria that threatens more than 2.5 billion people worldwide.

The work is part of the PArtnership for *Vivax* Elimination (PAVE) with the Burnet Institute, MMV and PATH to determine the operational feasibility of novel treatment strategies and support malaria-endemic countries to eliminate *P. vivax* malaria.

“Control of *Plasmodium vivax* malaria requires safe and effective treatment of the acute illness and also prevent recurrent infections. Recent advances have given us new tools and strategies to do this, but we need to show whether they are feasible and cost-effective to use on a large scale,” Professor Ric Price, at Menzies, said.

“The PAVE collaboration brings together policy-makers, researchers and healthcare providers to PAVE the way for better treatment of vivax malaria throughout Indonesia and further abroad. This is an exciting opportunity to work with fantastic partners to tackle a neglected tropical disease.”

Dr Minerva Theodora, from the Indonesian National Malaria Control Program (NMCP) said the PAVE collaboration is an essential step towards *P. vivax* elimination.

“There is a very high burden of vivax infections in Indonesia. Previous studies have shown that we can deploy existing tools more effectively to treat and ultimately eliminate *P. vivax*. PAVE gives us the platform to take what we have learned in clinical trials and put this into practice in a public health care setting, bringing together teams of policy makers, researchers, social scientists and economists. NMCP is committed to working with PAVE.”

Principal Investigators in Indonesia, Dr Rini Poespoprodjo, Dr Ayodhia Pitaloka Pasaribu, Prof Inge Sutanto and believe that collaborations such as PAVE are vital to achieve Indonesia’s elimination goals.

“We are looking forward to working together to eliminate *P. vivax* malaria in Indonesia. Our collaboration will enable us to deliver and evaluate new approaches to improve adherence and safety of primaquine treatment in patients with *vivax* malaria.”

In addition to the planned work in Indonesia, PAVE is facilitating similar collaborative studies in other *P. vivax* endemic countries including Papua New Guinea, Brazil, Ethiopia, India , Peru and Thailand.

PAVE is led by Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV) and PATH supported by USD\$ 25 million in new funding from Unitaid. MMV and Menzies also supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office, The Wellcome Trust and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

P. vivax accounts for between 7 and 14 million cases globally every year and presents a major challenge to malaria elimination because it can lie dormant in a person's liver reactivating weeks to months after initial infection to cause recurrent illness and ongoing transmission of the parasite.

Tackling *P. vivax* by treating both the blood- and liver-stage of the infection – known as radical cure – is essential to achieve the World Health Organization 2030 targets of reducing the incidence of malaria globally by at least 90 percent and eliminating malaria transmission in 35 countries.

To find out more about Menzies malaria research and how you can support this life-saving work visit <https://menzies.edu.au/malaria>.
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Menzies School of Health Research

Menzies is one of Australia's leading medical research institutes dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and a leader in global and tropical research into life-threatening illnesses, Menzies continues to translate research into effective partnerships and programs in communities across Australia and the Asia-Pacific region.