



EDCTP

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## OPT-SMC December 2021 Newsletter



### Seasons Greetings from the OPT-SMC team

Dear colleagues and partners, on behalf of the entire OPT-SMC Team, we would like to express our heartfelt thanks to you all. Despite the challenges brought on by the pandemic, we were able to start several implementation research projects and advance on many of those that were ongoing. We couldn't have achieved this without your support. Whereever, you may be, we wish you the very best for the holiday season.

Heartfelt greetings from the team,  
Prof. Jean-Louis Ndiaye

**News!**



### [SMC delivered to 33.5 million children in 2020 despite disruptions](#)

According to the 2021 World Malaria Report, SMC programmes were successfully maintained in 2020 in 13 countries, reaching a total of 33.5 million children. However, the report notes that in 2020, malaria deaths increased by 12% compared with 2019, to an estimated 627 000; about 47 000 (68%) of the additional 69 000 deaths were due to service disruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic.



### [WHO recommends RTSS/AS01 malaria vaccine in children aged 5 months and above](#)

On Oct 6, WHO announced their recommendation of the RTSS/AS01 malaria vaccine, in a schedule of 4 doses in children from 5 months of age, or, in areas with seasonal malaria, in a 5-dose strategy administered seasonally.



### [Gavi Board approved funding to support malaria vaccine roll-out](#)

And on Dec 2, the Gavi Board approved funding to support malaria vaccine roll-out in sub-Saharan Africa 2022-2025.

## OPT-SMC Country Updates

### Projects completed or ongoing:



#### **Guinea: Qualitative Evaluation of determinants of SMC uptake in the prefectures of Kankan and Siguiri:**

In 2020, the NMCP in collaboration with the Université Abdel Gamal Nasser completed a qualitative investigation into barriers to SMC uptake in mining communities. Barriers identified include lack of trust in the health system, use of drug distributors who were not from the local community, and families working away from home.

Together with local advocates, an action plan was developed and has been implemented during the 2021 campaign.



#### **Nigeria: Facilitators and barriers to uptake of SMC**

Qualitative research using focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with caregivers and with health staff is being undertaken in Kano, Kwara, Nasarawa, Yobe and Kebbi states, by the NMEP in collaboration with the universities of Jos and Ahmadu Bello, in low coverage and high coverage areas, to understand barriers to uptake and factors associated with high coverage. The project started in November shortly after the last SMC cycle of 2021.



#### **Benin: A case-control study to assess the effectiveness of SMC in Northern Benin**

SMC was first introduced in 2019. A case control study is being carried out in the municipalities of Malanville, Karimama, Kandi Gogounou and Ségbana in Alibori district in Northern Benin to assess the effectiveness of SMC treatments. Results are expected early in 2022.



#### **Ghana: Results of OPT-SMC project**

A household survey, focus group discussions with caregivers, and interviews with CHVs were also held to understand barriers to SMC uptake. 2100 households were visited in 150 clusters. 87.6% of children received four treatments. 96% of day1 treatments were directly observed. Side effects of SMC drugs, charging costs for management of side effects, and over-tasking of volunteers were identified as barriers to SMC uptake.

### **Planned projects**



#### **Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, The Gambia, Mali, Niger and Senegal**

The national malaria control programmes of Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, The Gambia, Mali, Niger and Senegal have developed plans for research projects to start in 2022, including studies of strategies to promote adherence, strategies to improve quality of SMC delivery, qualitative research on barriers to SMC

uptake, and country stratification in terms of number of cycles and age range for SMC.

## Field-based meetings



### Meeting with NMCP of Guinea Bissau

The OPT-SMC project team visited the NMCP of Guinea Bissau in October 2021 to explore developing a research project to respond to specific research questions identified as important for the optimal implementation of SMC.



### Meeting with NMEP Nigeria

In November, the OPT-SMC team visited the NMEP of Nigeria to discuss WHO recommendation on the malaria vaccine and possible strategies to combine malaria vaccination with SMC in Nigeria.

## 2021 Event highlights



### Workshop on qualitative research methods

A workshop on qualitative research methods for NMCP staff was held online on the 30th November 2021, facilitated by Dr Nadia Fanou-Fogny of the University of Abomey-Calavi, Cotonou. The aim of the workshop, which was in French, was to introduce the key principles of qualitative research methods and their application in the field. The workshop will be held in English, and a second workshop on qualitative data analysis, will be held early in 2022.



### OPT-SMC project presented at the 2021 EDCTP forum

Prof. Jean-Louis Ndiaye presented the achievements of the OPT-SMC project at the EDCTP forum in November. Elements he presented include indicators, preliminary findings, challenges and next steps.





## OPT-SMC partners presented at the 2021 online ASTMH meeting

- OPT-SMC partnership presented three posters:
  - the first is entitled, "Development and evaluation of video job-aids to support safe SMC delivery during the 2020 campaigns. (S Scott et al.)"
  - the second is entitled "Impact of COVID-19 on the chemoprevention strategy for SMC in the Sahel and sub-Saharan regions in west and central Africa during the 2020 SMC campaign"
  - and the third entitled, "Introducing field digital data collection systems into Seasonal Malaria Chemoprevention campaigns: opportunities for robust evidence development and national e-health strategies".
- The NMCP of Ghana also presented a poster entitled, "Assessing Coverage of Seasonal Malaria Chemoprevention in Ghana in 2020 (G Adu et al.)"



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