

Insecticide-treated bednets (ITNs) for malaria control : factors relevant for utilization in a western Kenyan community

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Stellingen behorende bij het proefschrift:

Insecticide-treated bednets (ITNs) for malaria control

**Relevance for utilization
in a western Kenyan community**

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- 1 One of the challenges of malaria control lies with concepts of multiple causation of the disease, in turn aggravated by the complexity of its transmission.
- 2 It is paradoxical that often, in the pursuit of quick positive results and for fear of programme failure, programmes fail to recognize that behaviour change is not a discrete event, misinterpreting the window period during which interventions are internalized before the decision to adopt or reject them, as failure!
- 3 The introduction of an intervention in any community must be preceded by a prior understanding of not just people's perceptions of a given health problem, but of the proposed intervention, too.
- 4 Bednet delivery programmes must recognize that community perceptions of disease, including resorts to care may not tally with expected 'formal' health seeking – conveying the subjective meaning of a health problem and its antecedents are key for success.
- 5 Effective programme design must take cognizance of the fact that people often look for the immediate practical benefits before they could begin to appreciate any longer-term advantages associated with a given intervention.
- 6 Lay people are often knowledgeable of a given health problem (albeit underpinned by indigenous beliefs) – their aspirations are better addressed based on listening-dialogue-reflection approach, rather than on passive information dissemination to "give knowledge".
- 7 Increased knowledge does not necessarily translate into action, thus programmes must seek to go beyond improving knowledge, targeting overt behavioural changes through carefully designed approaches aimed at addressing people's concerns and attitudes.
- 8 It is not so much that children, a highly valued "possession" in African communities, are relegated to the lower ranks of family hierarchy systems with regards to access to equally highly valued household possessions such as bednets – rather, the problem lies with the reasons underlying bednet use in lay communities.
- 9 Physical support systems to make interventions such as bednets and insecticide easily accessible are integral for programme sustainability – it is imperative that people know exactly where to get (purchase) bednets and insecticide, and specifically what insecticide to use.
- 10 A theoretical approach to programme design helps target variables relevant for exploration, and guides systematic interpretation of research findings.