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Book review

WHO Guidelines for the treatment of malaria, second edition. WHO Press, World Health Organization, 20 Avenue appia, CH-1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland. Publication: 2010. Pages: 194. Price: ₹560 (Softbound). Illustrations: nil. ISBN: 9789241547925.

Early diagnosis and prompt treatment with effective antimalarials is a vital component of malaria control strategies. The second edition of the World Health Organization (WHO) *Guidelines for the treatment of malaria* revisits the global recommendations on the case management of malaria on updated evidence compared to the earlier 2006 edition. Though the recommendations are targeted at the country level policy makers providing a framework for the development of specific and more detailed national treatment protocols, it is a valuable read for all clinicians and post-graduate students.

The second edition has been developed in accordance with the updated standard methods for guideline development, i.e. the GRADE system, which evaluates the strength of a recommendation based on the robustness of the evidence relating to a specific clinical question. The entire process has been funded by the Global Malaria Programme. The second edition also has additional recommendations on Artemisinin-based combination therapies (ACT) compared to the first edition.

The book begins with a short background and epidemiology of malaria and goes on to discuss in different sections, resistance, diagnosis, antimalarial treatment policy, and criteria for change in policy. This is followed by recommendations for treatment of different types of malaria including special groups (young children, pregnant women, HIV/AIDS) and travellers (from non-malaria endemic regions). The guidelines recommend

a parasitological confirmation of diagnosis in all patients suspected of having malaria before treating, allowing a targeted use of ACTs. This will help in reducing the emergence and spread of resistance. Comprehensive guidelines are also given to deal with the other aspects of malaria management, viz. in the context of epidemics and complex emergency situations, malaria elimination, and mass drug administration. The presentations are in a simple descriptive form with the main document containing the recommendations. Summaries of the recommendations are given in boxes with summaries of the grade profiles wherever available. Full review of the evidence, the complete GRADE tables, and additional references are provided in annexes appropriately referenced in the main document.

The guidelines would be of great benefit to both policy makers and clinicians alike. They can be applied to any setting including resource constraint settings. In April 2011, sections 8.4–8.6 were revised to reflect the change of treatment of severe falciparum malaria in children based on the results of a large randomised control trial in Africa available on WHO site. The guidelines, however, neither mentions chemoprophylaxis of malaria nor comments on intermittent preventive treatment (IPT). Readers in India will be able to relate to the recommendations in this book since these have formed the basis of the National Drug Policy for malaria revised in 2010.

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