

Abstract

Title: Community Pharmacists as Public Health Advocates: Outcomes of a World Malaria Day Intervention in Chikun Local Government Area, Kaduna State.

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Background: Malaria remains a public health challenge in Nigeria, driving substantial morbidity and mortality. Community pharmacists are strategically positioned to mitigate this burden through health education, early diagnosis, and appropriate referral. To commemorate World Malaria Day 2026, the ACPN and ALPs Kaduna State Branches conducted a community-based health outreach in Bayan-Dutse, Chikun Local Government Area in Kaduna State, to enhance diagnostic access and preventive awareness.

Objectives: To determine the prevalence of malaria disease using mRDT and describe commonly reported symptoms among residents of Bayan Dutse, Chikun LGA, Kaduna State.

Methods: A cross-sectional outreach was conducted utilizing voluntary participation among Bayan-Dutse residents. Demographic data and clinical complaints were documented. Malaria testing was performed using WHO-recommended Rapid Diagnostic Test (RDT) kits. Participants with positive results received counselling, standard antimalarial therapy, or referral. Data were entered and analyzed using Microsoft Excel 2021. Descriptive Statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were used to summarize the data.

Results: A total of 242 residents (aged 4 months to 86 years) participated. The most represented age cohorts were 9–14 years (n = 78; 32.2%), 15–19 years (n = 27; 11.2%), and 3–5 years (n = 21; 8.7%). Strikingly, only 8 participants (3.3%) tested positive for malaria, while 234 (96.7%) were RDT-negative. Paediatric and adolescent cohorts predominantly presented with headaches, abdominal pain, and dizziness; older adults frequently reported joint pain, general weakness, cough, hypertension, and diabetes-related concerns. The low positivity rate despite widespread constitutional symptoms highlights that many local febrile illnesses stem from non-malarial etiologies, underscoring the necessity of parasitological confirmation over presumptive treatment.

Conclusion: The intervention revealed a remarkably low malaria prevalence in Bayan-Dutse, despite a high frequency of diverse, age-specific constitutional symptoms. These findings demonstrate that presumptive malaria treatment based on symptoms alone is highly unreliable, emphasizing the critical need for diagnostic confirmation (mRDT) prior to therapy. Ultimately, this outreach highlights the vital role of community pharmacists as accessible public health advocates capable of curbing antimalarial misuse, promoting evidence-based care, and guiding patients toward appropriate management for non-malarial illnesses.

Keywords: Community Pharmacists, World Malaria Day, Rapid Diagnostic Test, Chikun LGA, Nigeria.