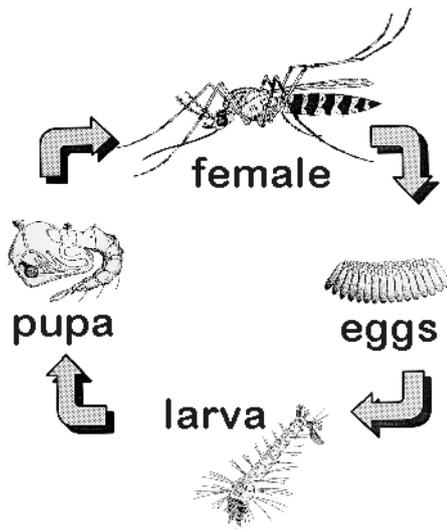


The significant growth of malaria cases in Southern Africa over the last couple of years is mostly due to the greater movement of people, particularly since the opening up of our borders after the elections.



The spread of malaria has very little to do with global warming, drug resistance or AIDS/HIV. As the mosquito is just a conduit or method of transmission, it is the human population that is actually responsible for the incubation and largescale spread of the disease.

While there are actually 4 species of malaria parasite, only the Plasmodium Falciparum is potentially life-threatening. While the other strains are re-occurring and chronically debilitating, they are fully treatable. If caught early enough falciparum is also treatable. Only the female Anopheles funestus mosquito transmits Plasmodium Falciparum, as it is she who requires a blood meal before laying her eggs. The male mostly consumes plant nectar.

There have been cases of people contracting bouts of malaria outside of infected areas, but this is mainly due to mosquitoes riding in aeroplanes, trains or motor vehicles and then biting someone on arrival at a foreign destination. This is known as airport malaria and is a growing problem.

Chemical sprays to control the growth of the Anopheles mosquito are only part of the solution, as the parasite can remain dormant in its human host. As a result, an outbreak will occur again during each breeding season. To be truly effective, our scientists will have to find ways of eradicating the parasites from all human hosts as well, perhaps in the form of inoculation or other medication? These programs will also have to include most herbivores, as cows and other such animals act as large reservoir hosts during the dry and cooler winter months.

In the meantime, we must all be extra vigilant and take every precaution to prevent being bitten at all times. There are several very effective repellents on the market, some chemical and some

herbal. Herbal sprays ( such as Janet Carter's Midge and Mosquito Repellent) are normally based on citronella oil, artemesia, lavender oil, lemon grass or other such oils with repellent qualities. Chemical sprays use a product called Diethyltoluamide or Deet.

Other precautions such as using chemically-impregnated bed nets, mosquito coils, and of course, chemoprophylaxis, are also recommended. Your local travel clinic or doctor can advise you on all of these matters.