

To the Editors:

Efficacy of a five-day course of primaquine in preventing relapses in *Plasmodium vivax* malaria – a pilot study

A 14-day course of primaquine is recommended for relapse prevention of *Plasmodium vivax* malaria for residents of non-endemic areas (1). But patient

Of the 6 patients recruited for the pilot study 5 relapsed (as confirmed by the presence of malarial parasites in blood smears). The patients who relapsed were

may be caused due to the long duration of therapy and side effects or not completed in some of the patients. Hence, with appropriate studies in India, a shorter than a 14-day course of primaquine was studied for efficacy in the Indian context in prevention of relapses (2). Some studies questioned the 14-day course already using the 5-day regimen for patients from non-endemic areas (3,4) in non-endemic areas to minimize the problem of drug-resistance. However, studies in non-endemic areas with Chinese patients, that the different studies of 7-day regimens were to high percentage of relapses (5). No study has ever done in India in this regard. In the 5-day course of primaquine is knowing the efficacy for the first relapse of the patients towards 5-day course and also help avoid the aspect of 14-days malaria.

We did a prospective study to evaluate the efficacy of primaquine in relapse prevention in 14-day in patients with relapses of *P. vivax* malaria. The study was done in the National Hospital at St. Louis. Ethical approval was obtained for the study.

The specific aims of primaquine was administered for 5 consecutive days under close supervision in patients with the confirmed blood film presence of *P. vivax* malaria. Patients from endemic endemic areas, those with the history of malaria and those with a cure of malaria relapses were during the following year were included into the study. The patients were followed up for relapse relapses and asked to return immediately if they develop symptoms suggestive of malaria.

relapsed with the 5-day course of primaquine.

The objective study suggests that the 5-day course of primaquine is as effective in preventing relapses of *P. vivax* malaria compared with 14-day in a study in the study in Tamil Nadu, India, which also did that the 5-day course of primaquine was as effective as the 14-day course. However, it is unclear if the higher relapse rate in patients (6). The results of the limited number of studies done in the suggestion the efficacy of the 5-day course of primaquine varies with country region and strain of the parasite. We recommend the use of the 5-day regimen of primaquine under close therapy for *P. vivax* malaria. There is adequate evidence to use the shorter 5-day course of primaquine.

References

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