

d Malaria update

The past 2016/17 malaria season was a particularly busy one, with large numbers of cases reported in Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces, South Africa, as well as in neighboring countries of Mozambique, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Namibia.

The summer 2017 malaria season is due to start in September but the winter period has seen an unusually high number of cases due to relatively warm temperatures in malaria areas.

All travellers to malaria risk areas, including the Kruger National Park, should take precautions against mosquito bites, consider the use of malarial preventive drugs, and most importantly, should seek medical help if they develop fever or a 'flu-like illness in the month after returning.

An urgent malaria blood test must be done on these cases and the results rapidly obtained and

treatment initiated if positive. A repeat test should be performed if the initial test is negative.

Symptoms of malaria overlap with those of influenza and the influenza season has not come to an end yet. These symptoms include fever, headache, cold shivers and hot sweats, and muscle pain. There is very effective treatment available for malaria, provided a diagnosis is made early – once complications develop, there will be a number of severely ill patients who do not respond to treatment and who will die as a result.

Refer to malaria prevention guidelines available on the NICD web page at www.nicd.ac.za

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