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Factors associated with low/non-utilization of long lasting insecticidal net (LLIN) among household members in malaria endemic areas of Bangladesh

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Statement of Problem: Bangladesh endures burden of malaria in 13 districts out of 64 districts with 17.52 million of the total population at risk. About 80% of malaria cases are reported from three highly endemic Chittagong Hill Tract (CHT) districts that are remote, hilly, forested and have border with India and Myanmar. As one of the important preventive approaches is the utilization of long-lasting insecticidal nets (LLINs), NGOs' community service providers distribute and encourage LLIN use at the doorsteps.

Methodology: A cross-sectional study was done to reveal the factors associated for low/non-utilization of LLIN among the household members where LLIN was distributed in malaria endemic CHT and non-CHT areas. A qualitative investigation was also done to explore the reasons of feckless use of LLIN in the study areas.

Results: Nearly 5% and 10% of population in CHT and non-CHT areas, respectively, did not sleep under LLINs, the night before; 5% males did not utilize LLIN compared to 4% females in CHT area whereas 10.6% males did not use LLIN compare to of 8.3% female in non-CHT areas. Among high risk group, 5% pregnant women and 4% under five children did not utilize LLIN and the major reasons for non-utilization among them was inadequacy of LLIN (64.5% and 72.7%, respectively). The other reasons identified by both qualitative and quantitative findings were staying outside of home at night due to occupational reason (woodcutter, jhoom cultivator); incompatible shape of LLIN with sleeping arrangements and house style; poor quality compare to the previous LLIN, feeling of discomfort (burning sensation, breathlessness, body itching, etc.), lack of knowledge and saving for other members, etc.

Conclusion: Though the number is nominal, but the program should pay attention to the issues of low/non-using LLIN to embark the elimination strategy with a vision of malaria free Bangladesh.

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