

Malaria and semen quality: An issue in reproductive health?

Sir,

Malaria is an important tropical mosquito-borne infection affecting millions of people around the world. There are many health effects of this infection. Focusing on reproductive health, the effect of malaria on semen in an infected male is a myth. Decreased semen quality in malarial infected male has been reported.^[1] Severe oligozoospermia, necrozoospermia or azoospermia can be observed.^[1] It is proposed that malaria or its treatment might be the etiologies. However, recovery has been reported when malaria is cured.^[1] An interesting explanation of oligozoospermia is the high fever during malarial symptoms. Nevertheless, there are reports describing that people with sickle cell abnormality or thalassemia have milder oligozoospermia, in either acute or past infection stage, compared to those with the normal genotype.^[2,3] Zei *et al.* reported an interesting observation that the increased fertility in high endemic areas may be due to the greater acquired immunity and a higher frequency of heterozygotes for malarial genes, such as thalassemia and G6PD deficiency.^[4] Hence, further studies to verify the correlation between malaria, relating genotypes and infertility are recommended.

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