Malaria Policy and Climate Change
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Abstract:
Due in part to the lack of local input on policies enacted by international organizations, there is a disconnect in the efforts to eradicate malaria and emerging knowledge of the risks of climate change on malaria.

Malaria and Climate Change
- Malaria is highly dependent on specific precipitation levels and temperatures, making it sensitive to climate change.
- Mosquitoes, the vector for malaria, require a temperature of at least 18°C to breed, the higher the temperature, the higher rate of infection, as seen in the graph. (Githeko 2001)
- In the formerly cool and arid Kenyan highlands, health workers are already seeing increases in malaria cases in locations where until recently were very few.

Critique
- The majority of malaria policies are reactionary, treating cases instead of trying to prevent the spread to new populations.
- The variable nature of climate change makes it difficult to tailor policy to the changes in a particular area.
- The bureaucratic nature of large governmental organizations does not foster local innovation.
- By relinquishing more responsibility to local experts, more knowledgeable and flexible policy could be implemented to address local changes.

Current Policies
- Despite a 2003 World Health Organization report about climate change and health, no policy updates have been made. (McMichael et al. 2003)
- Due to the global nature of the policy-implementing World Health Organization, local specialization of policy is difficult.
- The most common current policy is medicated bed nets for the prevention of new infections and free drugs for current cases.

Image Credit:
The World Health Organization; PBS.org; Wikipedia.org

Andrew Githeko, and William Ndegwa, "Predicting malaria epidemics in the Kenyan highlands using climate data: a tool for decision makers,” Global Change & Human Health, 2, no. 1 (2001): 54-63,