Saving the Most Vulnerable from Malaria

By Abraham Ayuen, Communications Specialist

Yohana Peter, a 6-year-old clutches a bottle of mango juice as he waits for his medication outside a pharmacy at Al Sabah Children Hospital in Juba South Sudan. Seated next to his mother on metallic bench, Yohana looks anxious.

"He had fever and stomach pain. I gave him some medicines at home but his condition continued to worsen, so I brought him to the hospital to be seen by a doctor," Says Asunta, Wasuk, Yohana's mother.

Yohana's family lives in Kondokoro village in Juba County, South Sudan. In this village, access to basic services like medical care and education are limited. Although Yohana is enrolled in a nursery school in the village, his elder sibling walks for about 11 kilometers to Juba city every day to get an education. On April 11, 2016, Yohana was brought to Al Sabah Children Hospital by his mother so that he may see a doctor.

After consulting the doctor, Yohana was confirmed to have Malaria. He was given a three-day dose of Artemisinin-based Combination Therapy (ACT), the first line treatment for treating uncomplicated Malaria in South Sudan. Asunta is glad that her son was able to find free Malaria treatment at Al Sabah Hospital. Asunta usually buy and keeps a limited assortment of essential drugs like Paracetamol, Metronidazole and ACTs, which she uses to treat her children when they feel sick in the village.

"Our home is far away from the clinic; I have to keep some medicines at home in order to treat my children when they get sick at night," says Asunta.

Malaria remains endemic in South Sudan, and accounts for about 40 percent of outpatient consultations and 30 percent for inpatient admissions and 20 percent deaths in health facilities. In Al Sabah Hospital, Dr. Felix Ngungura, the Executive Director, affirms that most of the patients who seek treatment in the hospital are Malaria patients. Dr. Ngungura estimates that the hospital receives between 150-200 patients per a day with 40% of these being admitted into various wards.

"Malaria is a serious problem. Majority of those occupying beds in the hospital are malaria patients," Says Dr. Felix Nyungura.

Al Sabah Hospital is one of the major health facilities that have received ACTs from USAID. In respond to the 2015, Malaria upsurge in South Sudan, the USAID through its Systems for Improved Access to Pharmaceutical and Services (SIAPS) supplied 635,650 ACTs to South Sudan of which 100,000 doses were sent to health facilities through the Central Medical Stores to boost buffer stocks of ACTs as part of the Emergency Medicines Funds last consignment. These ACTs will contribute to

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SIAPS Systems for Improved Access to Pharmaceuticals and Services

saving the lives of the most vulnerable groups—children and pregnant women from Malaria. By mid-April, SIAPS had delivered 51% of the 535,650 doses of the USAID donated ACTs to health facilities in the former Central Equatoria State.

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- Dr. Felix Ngungura, Al Sabah

Yohan sits with his mother near a pharmacy at Al Sabah Children Hospital in Juba South Sudan.
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