International Partner Highlights

The Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) has been collaborating closely with the World Health Organization (WHO)/Global Malaria Program (GMP) to update the recommended regional treatment guidelines based on malaria trends detected by the AMI/RAVREDA network. Together with WHO/GMP, PAHO is developing a “Plan for Artemisinin Resistance Containment and Elimination in South America,” in alignment with AMI/RAVREDA strategies and designed to complement the existing AMI framework. In addition, PAHO has continued to provide technical assistance to AMI countries. PAHO’s Strategic Fund for the joint purchasing of medicines has worked closely with Guatemala and Guyana to strengthen their capacity for monitoring stocks of antimalarial medicines as well as to improve their reporting to the Performance Review and Assessment of Implementation System (PRAIS).
In four months, over 130 patients were enrolled in the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)’s in vivo monitoring of the efficacy of the standard treatment for *P. vivax* malaria in Acre state, Brazil. This public health surveillance activity will take place through December 2014. Also in Brazil, the ethical committee of the Instituto Evandro Chagas approved the CDC’s evaluation protocol for the RealAmp platform. RealAmp is a simple portable device that integrates the isothermal amplification technique (LAMP) with a fluorescent detection unit. As a new platform, it will be tested in Brazil as a tool for the collection of real-time surveillance data. The CDC continues to participate with Peru’s National Institute of Health in a demonstration project that characterizes the mechanisms of insecticide resistance in *Anopheles albimanus*, a major malaria vector throughout the Americas, to promote the selection of evidence-based vector control tools in Peru. Finally, the CDC will facilitate a training workshop for Honduran entomologists on the interpretation of insecticide resistance surveillance data and the use of bioassays in the testing of insecticide-treated bed nets in September 2014.

![Photo: Marieke Heemskerk](image)

The USAID-funded Systems for Improved Access to Pharmaceuticals and Services Program (SIAPS) made progress towards institutionalizing national and regional mechanisms to ensure a continuous supply of antimalarials, particularly in low-incidence areas. Six countries have adopted and implemented revised criteria for the distribution of antimalarials in low-incidence areas. SIAPS staff collected information to assess this development in Ecuador, Colombia, Guyana, and Peru, and will continue the evaluation process for an in-depth analysis of malaria pharmaceutical management in the region, which will help to shape future technical support. A technical document was published concerning the state of antimalarial pharmaceutical management as well as the impact of AMI interventions in Ecuador and Colombia. SIAPS has continued its decentralized technical assistance to Loreto, Peru, and gathered information for a similar situational assessment. SIAPS representatives in Peru shared their findings with the Director of the National Pharmaceutical Directorate (DIGEMID).

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The Promoting the Quality of Medicines (PQM) program, a cooperative agreement between USAID and the U.S. Pharmacopeial Convention (USP), is currently developing a proposal with the National Malaria Control Program (NMCP) in Brazil to strengthen quality assurance/quality control for malaria medicines. This proposal, which aims to complement existing collaboration between the NMCP, PAHO, and the Federal University of Minas Gerais’ School of Pharmacy, will be submitted to ANVISA, Brazil’s medicine regulatory agency. As follow-up to a regional training delivered in Colombia in 2013, PQM has initiated inter-laboratory proficiency testing to assess the capacity of selected AMI countries’ Official Medicine Quality Laboratories to test Artemether-Lumefantrine fixed-dose combination tablets, a medicine used in many AMI countries as the first-line treatment for uncomplicated P. falciparum malaria. Participating countries are Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, and Suriname. PQM is developing an internet-based tool that will strengthen regulators’ capacity to perform visual and physical inspection of medicines in the field. This tool will allow inspectors to retrieve information about medicines in situ to assess compliance with registration specifications. A pilot assessment of the tool in selected countries is expected during the last quarter of 2014. PQM will convene a workshop with representatives of relevant Latin American government institutions and academia to discuss the development of a sustainable framework for South-South collaboration. The goal is to use regional professional and technical resources from public and private organizations, whether governmental or academic, to ensure that countries’ needs for quality control are properly addressed independently of international technical or financial assistance. This workshop will take place in Peru during the last quarter of 2014.

As a result of Links Media’s knowledge dissemination efforts, selected materials produced by AMI partners were shared via digital information services including Malaria Nexus, Eldis, ReliefWeb, and USAID’s Development Experience Clearinghouse. Among these materials was a new project brochure that Links Media created highlighting contributions USAID has made to malaria prevention and control in the Americas through AMI. Communication assessments were carried out by telephone with NMCP representatives in Guatemala and Nicaragua. In addition, Links Media collaborated with PAHO to promote the open call for nominations for the 2014 Malaria Champions of the Americas competition and a survey to help set malaria research priorities. Links Media continued to manage online stakeholder engagement on behalf of AMI. The AMI website has been updated to include a more streamlined “Resources” page to help end users identify materials by topic. During the 2014 World Cup, AMI participated in the Roll Back Malaria social media campaign featuring internationally renowned footballer Didier Drogba. This included disseminating AMI-specific information using key hashtags and messages. From April to June 2014, AMI’s “Likes” on Facebook grew by 25%, Twitter followers increased by 11%, and a new Instagram profile was created to share visual information.
Country Spotlight

Colombia

In the month of June, several community campaigns were held in the departments of Córdoba and Antioquia to educate at-risk populations in the proper use of mosquito nets. Colombia’s National Malaria Control Program, PAHO, and the Global Fund’s Colombia Malaria Project (PMC) organized a meeting on the social component for malaria control. In addition, the Ministry of Health and PAHO held a workshop to validate a set of guidelines on information, education, communication and social mobilization (IECMS) for public health developed by the Universidad del Valle’s Center for the Development and Evaluation of Public Health Policies and Technology (Cedetes). Multiple stakeholders provided input for the document, which is expected to establish national health communication and education guidelines.

Nicaragua

PAHO conducted a capacity building workshop in Puerto Cabezas for insecticide resistance monitoring in areas of high, medium, and low malaria transmission. Six people were trained in using the CDC bottle bioassays. Using this method, the mosquito species *Anopheles albimanus* was found to be 100% susceptible to the insecticides Etofenprox, Deltamethrin, and Alphacypermethrin in various parts of the country. In June, PAHO provided support to a training workshop to help strengthen the capacity of lab workers from Nicaragua’s National Reference Center for Diagnosis (CNDR MINSA) in using microscopy diagnosis. In addition, the PAHO/WHO focal point in Nicaragua advocated for the approval of a new in vivo study of chloroquine as a first-line antimalarial for the treatment of *P. falciparum* malaria, in light of the fact that the last study occurred in 2006. Formal approval from the Nicaraguan Minister of Health is required in order to move forward with the design of the research protocol and implementation of the study.

Guyana

Guyana has procured Rapid Diagnostic Tests (RDTs) for initial roll-out in one of its most endemic regions. The chosen RDT was based on PAHO/WHO guidelines disseminated during the 2013 Annual AMI Evaluation Meeting in Peru.

Panama

RDTs have been rolled out for use in remote areas in Panama, following an agreement between the Ministry of Health and the health professionals’ union.

Peru

From July 1-4, PAHO assisted with a technical meeting on vector surveillance and control to identify gaps and challenges for the implementation of integrated vector management in Peru.
2014 Events and Meetings

August

International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples
August 9, 2014

13th International Congress of Parasitology (ICOPA XIII)

September

AMI/RAVREDA Steering Committee Meeting
September 2014. Washington, DC, USA.

Vector-Borne Diseases: Exploring the Environmental, Ecological, and Health Connections Institute of Medicine (IOM)’s Forum on Microbial Threats
September 16-17, 2014. Washington, D.C.

Training Workshop: Use of Bioassays in Testing of Insecticide-Treated Bed Nets
Facilitated by CDC. September 2014. Honduras.

Amazonian Conference on Emerging Infectious Diseases

November

American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene 63rd Annual Meeting
November 2-6, 2014. New Orleans, LA, USA

Malaria Day in the Americas
November 6, 2014.

American Public Health Association (APHA) 2014 142nd Annual Meeting

Entomology 2014: 62nd Annual Meeting of the Entomology Society of America
November 16-19, 2014. Portland, OR, USA

South-South Collaboration Workshop

Release of WHO’s World Malaria Report: 2014 TBD

December

International Day of People with Disabilities
December 3, 2014.

International Migrants Day
December 18, 2014.