FACTS ABOUT MALARIA VIVAX

1. MALARIA CAUSED BY THE PARASITE PLASMODIUM VIVAX HAS HISTORICALLY BEEN A NEGLECTED DISEASE

2. P. VIVAX MALARIA HAS THE WIDEST GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION IN THE WORLD

3. CONTRARY TO WHAT WAS ONCE BELIEVED, P. VIVAX ALSO CAUSES DEATH AND DISEASE SEVERITY AND HAS DEVELOPED RESISTANCE TO CHLOROQUINE AND OTHER DRUGS

4. P. VIVAX CAN LIE DORMANT IN THE LIVER FOR WEEKS, MONTHS AND EVEN YEARS. THIS LATENT FORM OF THE PARASITE, CALLED THE HYPNOZOITE, CAN CAUSE RELAPSE EVEN A LONG TIME AFTER INFECTION.

5. P. VIVAX EVOLVED CRYPTIC ERYTHROCYTIC NICHES IN THE SPLEEN AND BONE MARROW. THESE CRYPTIC NICHES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR CHRONIC ASYMPTOMATIC INFECTIONS. THE SPLEEN HARBOURS MORE THAN 95% OF THE PARASITE BIOMASS DURING THESE INFECTIONS.

6. BLOOD STAGE PARASITES THAT TRANSMIT P. VIVAX MALARIA DEVELOP BEFORE CLINICAL SYMPTOMS APPEAR. THEREFORE THE DISEASE IS PROPAGATED BY APPARENTLY HEALTHY PEOPLE WHO ARE INFECTED.

7. P. VIVAX MALARIA RESEARCH IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT BECAUSE NO ONE HAS SUCCEEDED IN GROWING THE PARASITE IN THE LABORATORY.

It will not be possible to eradicate malaria until the problem of P. vivax is properly addressed.