

Taking malaria through the hoops

An update on activities from our **Publishing Partners**

ExxonMobil ExxonMobil is proud to support *Africa Health* and its work to educate health professionals in Africa. Exxon Mobil Corporation and its affiliated companies have operated in Africa for more than a century. As a major employer and investor in Africa, ExxonMobil is committed to helping families stay healthy and building more prosperous and productive communities across Africa. In keeping with this aim, ExxonMobil operates programmes to combat malaria and other infectious diseases across the developing world.

Exposure to infectious diseases can severely affect workers, their families and communities. ExxonMobil is particularly committed to ending deaths from malaria. In partnership with various organisations, governments, and institutions, the ExxonMobil Malaria Initiative has invested more than \$110 million toward malaria control efforts since 2000. Their support has reached more than 83 million people across 17 countries with the distribution of 13.1 million bed nets, nearly 1.8 million doses of anti-malarial drugs, and more than 942 000 rapid diagnostic kits. They have also funded programmes that have trained nearly 250 000 healthcare workers. These programmes are saving lives and helping turn back malaria. For example, in western Angola, with support from the ExxonMobil Foundation, the Benguela Consortium's Malaria Control Programme reached more than 178 000 individuals, helping to decrease reported malaria cases in the province by more than 44% – and malaria-related deaths by 80% – between 2009 and 2011.



MMV's Project of the Year 2012 awarded

The first antimalarial compound to be researched on African soil was named Project of the Year for 2012 by Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV). The compound, MMV390048, was developed by an international collaboration led by a team of scientists from the University of Cape Town (UCT).

The award was given in recognition of the potential of this compound to become part of a single-dose cure for malaria. Prof Kelly Chibale, the Founder and Director of H3-D, UCT's drug discovery and development centre, received the award on behalf of the team at the International Malaria Symposium at UCT.

'We are very excited about the promise shown by MMV390048 against the blood stage of malaria,' said Dr Timothy Wells, Chief Scientific Officer at MMV. 'The compound is showing more potency than chloroquine or even artemisinin. It also has activity against other stages of the malaria parasite's life-cycle as well as all known resistant strains of the

parasite. The development of the MMV390048 shows once again that African scientists are rising to the challenge and taking the lead in malaria drug research, using the partnership model to achieve success.'

The search for new antimalarials is a global endeavour. MMV is one of the world's leading organisations driving the quest to find a single-dose cure for this disease. It is working in partnership with UCT, which focuses its research on critical issues affecting developing countries. The malaria parasite is beginning to display signs of resistance to drugs currently being used in the treatment of malaria, and thus there is an urgent need to develop new drugs to effectively treat the disease.

MMV390048 has now entered preclinical development, with partnerships in India, South Korea, the United Kingdom and the United States. The compound is expected to be ready for human testing in March 2014.



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Olympic basketball player with a passion for health

'My passion is to work at the intersection of sport, health and education – using sport, and particularly basketball, as a way to encourage young people to be active and to lead healthy lives,' said Nigerian American basketball player Aniekani 'Koko' Archibong.

Koko, 32, a 2.05m (6ft 9in) small forward, competed in the 2012 Olympic Games as part of the Nigerian national team. 'That was an amazing experience – really a dream come true for me,' said Koko, a University of Liverpool online Master of Public Health (MPH) graduate.

'I'm planning to find a way to encourage young people in Nigeria to take up sports, particularly basketball, as a way of leading a healthy life,' said Koko, who has dual US-Nigerian citizenship.

Originally intent upon a career in medicine, Koko was spotted as a basketball talent while studying medical anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania, USA. He has been involved in health outreach activities throughout his career – encouraging youngsters in Germany, Poland, and the USA to get active.

'The MPH degree programme showed me some of the interesting and innovative ways that you can influence health in the community around you. You don't necessarily need to wear a white coat and be a doctor in a hospital to do that,' he said.

