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From fever to anti-malarial: the process of seeking and receiving appropriate treatment in rural Senegal [MIM16671406]

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National and international targets of 80% of malaria cases receiving appropriate treatment are not being met. There are several stages involved in receiving appropriate treatment. Understanding at which stage children are lost from the appropriate treatment process is key to developing effective interventions. This paper reports on a cluster-based household survey to investigate the current treatment-seeking practices of caretakers of children under five years with fever in the last two weeks in southeast Senegal. Multivariate logistic regression is used to investigate determinants of action at different stages in the process of seeking and receiving treatment. Overall 61.6% of children under five years with fever were given any treatment; 17.0% an anti-malarial and 9.2% artesunate-amodiaquine (ASAQ, the national first-line ACT). Although the proportion of febrile children seeking treatment at a community-level delivery point was only 7.8% (compared to 31.5% and 17.0% accessing a formal public health facility or informal private source, respectively), the likelihood of these children receiving an anti-malarial was 4 times greater than those that first sought care in the formal public sector (OR: 4.20; 95% CI: 1.49, 11.8; p=0.007); findings were similar for receiving ASAQ (OR: 4.18; 95% CI: 1.37, 12.7; p=0.004). These findings are used as the basis for a discussion of the determinants of receiving appropriate and effective treatment, depending upon where this treatment is sought. Thereby providing an evidence base for district level strategic planning and focussing of resources.