

Nigeria: Genetically engineered bacteria prevent mosquitoes from transmitting Malaria

In a renewed hope to eliminate the menace of malaria on human health, researchers at the Johns Hopkins Malaria Research Institute have genetically modified a bacterium commonly found in the mosquito's midgut, to kill the malaria parasite before it is transmitted.

The bacterium, *Pantoea agglomerans*, was modified to secrete proteins toxic to the malaria parasite, but the toxins do not harm the mosquito or humans. According to a study published by PNAS, the modified bacteria were 98 percent effective in reducing the malaria parasite burden in mosquitoes.

Dr. Marcelo Jacobs-Lorena, Senior author of the study and a professor with Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health said: "In the past, we worked to genetically modify the mosquito to resist malaria, but genetic modification of bacteria is a simpler approach. The ultimate goal is to completely prevent the mosquito from spreading the malaria parasite to people."

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