

Malaria-transmitting mosquitoes wiped out in successful cutting-edge gene drive trial

Scientists have [successfully wiped out a population of malaria-transmitting mosquitoes](#) by using a radical form of genetic engineering to render the females infertile – in the most advanced and largest ever test of use of the technology to fight the disease.

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Dr Drew Hammond, at [Imperial College London](#), who led the new research, said: “Gene drive is a self sustaining and fast acting technology that can work alongside existing tools such as bed nets, insecticides and vaccines, and could be a game changer in bringing about malaria elimination.”

The development aims to bypass natural selection by plugging in a set of genetic instructions that will rapidly spread through a population and pass on a particular trait – in this case infertility – far faster than could be achieved through conventional selective breeding.

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[F]ield trials could start within the next few years. Assuming they were successful, Hammond said he could imagine that “within 10 years we would have a limited release of gene-drive mosquitoes at our field testing site, probably in Burkina Faso”.

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