

Long-awaited malaria vaccines finally reach children's arms — but how effective are they?

As the World Health Organization announces the next step in its rollout of the world's first authorized malaria vaccine in three African countries, concerns about its value have come from an unlikely source: the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, arguably the vaccine's biggest backer.

WHO endorsed the vaccine last fall as a "[historic](#)" breakthrough in the fight against malaria, but the Gates Foundation told The Associated Press this week it will no longer offer direct financial support to the shot although it will fund an alliance backing the vaccine.

Some scientists say they're mystified by that decision, warning it could leave millions of African children at risk of dying from malaria as well as undermine future efforts to solve intractable problems in public health.

The vaccine, sold by GlaxoSmithKline as Mosquirix, is about 30% effective and requires four doses.

The malaria vaccine has "a much lower efficacy than we would like," Philip Welkhoff, the Gates Foundation's director of malaria programs, told the AP. Explaining its decision to end support after spending more than \$200 million and several decades getting the vaccine to market, he said the shot is relatively expensive and logistically challenging to deliver.

Follow the latest news and policy debates on sustainable agriculture, biomedicine, and other 'disruptive' innovations. Subscribe to our newsletter.

[SIGN UP](#)

"It's not like we have a lot of other alternatives," [Liverpool's Alastair] Craig said. "There could be another vaccine approved in about five years, but that's a lot of lives lost if we wait until then,"

[**This is an excerpt. Read the original post here**](#)