Viewpoint: 126 million Africans are vulnerable to malaria. Bill Gates explains why gene drive mosquitoes may be the only solution

Since establishing a beachhead in Djibouti, *An. stephensi* mosquitoes have been detected in Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, Kenya and as far away as Nigeria and Ghana, in West Africa. According to one study, if this mosquito is left unchecked an additional 126 million people on the continent will be at risk of malaria.

The fight against mosquitoes and the diseases they carry has always been a game of cat and mouse. Humans develop new interventions—like bed nets, insecticides, and treatments—to protect themselves from mosquitoes. Mosquitoes, meanwhile, have an incredible capacity to adapt, allowing them to eventually dodge or develop resistance to the latest control methods. Then humans respond with more innovations to outsmart the mosquitoes. And so on.

Oxitec, however, aims to change this game from cat versus mouse to mouse versus mouse. Or in this case, mosquito versus mosquito. Oxitec specializes in using mosquitoes to fight other mosquitoes. With its genetic technology, Oxitec has already developed mosquitoes to effectively combat the dengue fever –carrying mosquito, *Aedes aegypti*, in Brazil. Now Oxitec plans to use the same technology to help African governments control *An. stephensi* and reduce the spread of malaria.

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