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Imported malaria in immigrants and travellers living in Valencia (Spain): a 12-year study in a tertiary hospital

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Objectives: Immigrants from endemic zones who live in Europe have the greatest risk of acquiring malaria due to their exposure to the disease. The aim of this study was to determine the demographic and clinical characteristics of malaria in our hospital.

Methods: An observational and descriptive study of laboratory confirmed malaria episodes with hospital admission.

Results: Over the period studied, 188 episodes of malaria were diagnosed in 178 patients (58.4% were female), median age 31 years. In the majority of episodes and the percentage of severe malaria was 5.1%: distress respiratory syndrome (65.7%), renal failure (55.3%).

None of the patients had taken an appropriate malaria prophylaxis. Treatment most often used was quinine plus doxycycline combination.

Conclusions: Our series shows that *P. falciparum* is the most frequently diagnosed species, followed by mixed infections. Haemoglobin level and platelet count are significantly lower in severe malaria patients.

Access to information on prevention and chemoprophylaxis should be available to all travellers, particularly immigrants visiting their country of origin.