

Mosquito Net Distribution Diambo Soubalo, Hamady Baga, Ouro Baaba Ly and Guedel Comi

PCV Emily Cole
December 22-24, 2009

Summary

In partnership with Against Malaria and the Ministry of Health, PCV Emily Cole, Mamadou Diome, Infirmier Chief du Post Diambo Soubalo, Ibrahim Mall, community relais, Yassine Ndiaye, community relais, Mariam Ba, community relais and Binta Mall, community relais held malaria education events, surveyed bednet usage and distributed 444 long-lasting insecticide treated nets to the villages covered by the health post in Diambo Soubalo (population ~2000).



Flooding during the past particularly wet rainy season caused buildings and walls to collapse and increased the risk of malaria.

Preparation

Starting well before the nets arrived, PCV Emily Cole worked with community relais to raise awareness about malaria prevention. During the rainy season community relais worked to encourage people to drain all standing water with limited success. In preparation for the net distribution, activities included home-visits to encourage repairs to torn mosquito nets, information on use and caring for insecticide treated nets (during national bed net distribution to children under 5 October 2009).

The week before the distribution Emily Cole, Ibrahim Mall and Binta Mall conducted house-to-house surveys of net usage and availability. The survey was completed as close to the distribution date as possible to ensure accuracy. Binta Mall was particularly important in explaining the importance of having accurate information about the number of beds and number of people in the house. Some people were hesitant to give an exact number of people living in the house, as that is culturally taboo, but by listing names, we were able to get an accurate count.

Diambo Soubalo and Goude Comi had received nets for children under 5 two months before. The other two small villages had not received any nets and their net coverage was very low. Many people had very old, torn, or otherwise unserviceable nets. During each visit relais emphasized the importance of sleeping under bed nets, especially for pregnant women and children.

Distribution



Binta Mall and Baby Mariam distribute mosquito nets in Diambo Soubalo

The distribution began in Diambo Soubalo on December 22, 2010. PCV Jaime Bodden joined Emily Cole and the relais for the biggest day of the distribution. One team member opened all of the bags and divided them into groups for each household. The other relais worked as runners taking the bundles of nets to individual houses. The relais then double checked the number of nets received with the number of beds and reviewed use and care of the nets. They emphasized that nets should only be washed a couple of times a year and used throughout the year, even when there are few mosquitoes and/or when sleeping indoors.



Binta and Ibrahim getting ready to go to Hamady Baga



Women receiving nets in Hamady Baga

December 23, 2009 Binta Mall, Ibrahim Mall and Emily Cole took a boat over to the Ile de Morfil to distribute in the small village of Hamady Baga. The village is so small that they began by distributing nets together in the first 3 houses and then asked the women to meet them at the village chief's house to receive their families' nets. This herding community is removed from most government servicing having neither a health hut nor a primary school. Community members were eager for the nets as they had not been covered in the national distribution and mosquito nets have not been available in the markets for several months.



Meeting with community members outside of government-built barracks in Goudel Comi

December 24, 2009 Ibrahim Mall and Emily Cole took a charet with 90 nets to Ouro Baaba Ly and Goudel Comi. Ouro Baaba Ly is a small village of only 4 households. They met with each household and distributed the nets. Goudel Comi, a leper colony, is also a very small village and they went house-to-house to distribute the nets. These two villages are often overlooked in health outreach and were very appreciative of the nets. Neither village had received nets in the national distribution. That Friday the village of Goudel Comi held a prayer meeting to pray for the people who provided them with mosquito nets.

Follow-Up and Evaluation

In the days immediately following the distribution, Emily Cole returned to all houses each community to ensure that people were using the nets and that none had been resold. No nets have shown up at the local markets. There were some complaints and demands for more nets, but far less than anticipated. All communities were happy with the distribution and were happy to “spend the entire night in peace” unmolested by mosquitoes and flies. As it was the cold season, relais checked to make sure that nets were hanging inside the houses.

In February, Emily Cole revisited each community to see if people were still using the nets. All of the nets were still in use although people asked for additional nets to take with them when they camp in their fields during that season.

Emily Cole spoke to individual households about the importance of reducing standing water and planted trees outside of 4 showers in Diambo Soubalo where water was pooling. She will follow-up on this tree-planting in April.

It is not yet malarial season in the area, so there is no new data on malaria rates. Malaria rates in this area are generally low, so any change may not be statistically significant. The communities are, however, grateful for a peaceful night's sleep.