Malaria: Self-Test Kit for Falciparum Malaria

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CONCLUSION: The ICT do-it-yourself diagnostic kit for Plasmodium falciparum malaria has an impressive sensitivity and specificity in febrile travelers returned from malaria-endemic countries; however, 11% of patients could not achieve a valid result...

COMMENTARY: A reliable and acceptable self-diagnostic test for malaria would be useful for travelers in areas where facilities for diagnosis and treatment are poor, and that would include much of sub-Saharan Africa. Such a test would need to be easy to perform and have foolproof instructions readable by ill febrile travelers. False negative results would be unacceptable, but a few false positives would not be important ... 9% of invitees would not participate, some because they felt too unwell, and 11% of participants could not perform or read the test properly, often without realizing their own failure to do so. Modifications to the lancet and the insert instructions helped to improve acceptability but had little effect on performance. Any manufacturer thinking of marketing such a kit directly to the traveling public would be well-advised to validate its usability under the most realistic conditions possible and to modify the test and instructions as necessary.

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