

Treatment Seeking Behaviour in Rural Areas of Assam, India and Its Impact on Malaria during the Epidemic

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ABSTRACT Investigations on treatment seeking behavior of the affected communities prior to/ during malaria outbreak in Jorhat district of Assam, India revealed 63.7 percent people initially approached to unqualified village level practitioners as compared to only 25.1 percent reporting to qualified allopathic doctors (government or private medical practitioners) for the treatment of fever. Clinical recovery rate was nearly double (82.1%) in those who took treatment from qualified doctors than the other group (43.3%), the difference being highly significant ($p < 0.001$). In blood smear examination of people, categorized according to source of treatment, upto 8 weeks after initial fever, slide positive rate (SPR) was highest (27.4%) in those who took treatment from unqualified village level practitioners followed by those remaining without any treatment (SPR 21.9%) and least in those seeking treatment from qualified doctors (SPR 18.6%). Treatment seeking pattern of the community, in general, and its implication on epidemic progression has been discussed.