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Malaria breathalyzer test could help millions – 10th November, 2017

Level 4

Scientists made a breathalyzer to test for malaria. It could find the disease faster than other methods and help millions. People with malaria have a special "breath print". The breathalyzer finds chemicals in the breath print. One of the odours the device finds is the same as a smell that attracts malaria-spreading insects. The device is still being developed. The researchers say it could be a new, cheap and easy way to help diagnose malaria.

The breathalyzer looks for six different odours to spot malaria. The researchers tested 35 children. They successfully found that 29 of the children had malaria - an accuracy rate of 83 per cent. The lead researcher said that easy-to-use testing devices could reduce antibiotic use. She said: "This would have a major impact on the control of malaria, because all current [testing] methods require blood sampling." Malaria kills about 430,000 people a year.

Level 5

Scientists have made a breathalyzer to test people for malaria. It could help detect the deadly disease earlier than other methods and help millions of people. The researchers say people with malaria give off a special "breath print". The breathalyzer detects the breath print chemicals when someone breathes into the device. One of the odours the device finds is the same as a natural smell that attracts malaria-spreading insects. The device is still in the early stages of development. The researchers say it could be a new, cheap and easy way to help diagnose malaria.

The breathalyzer detects six different odours to spot cases of malaria. The researchers tested 35 children in Malawi. They took breath samples to test the accuracy of the machine. It accurately said 29 of the children had malaria - a success rate of 83 per cent. The lead researcher said that easy-to-use, reliable testing devices could reduce unnecessary antibiotic use. She said: "This would have a major impact on the control of malaria, because all current [testing] methods require blood sampling." Malaria currently kills around 430,000 people a year around the world.

Level 6

Scientists have developed a breathalyzer to test people for malaria. The device could help detect the deadly disease much earlier than other methods and thus help millions of people around the world. The researchers, from Washington University in St Louis, USA, say that people with malaria give off a distinctive "breath print". The breathalyzer detects the chemicals that malaria creates as the person breathes into the device. One of the odours the device detects is identical to a natural smell that attracts malaria-spreading insects such as mosquitos. The device is still in its early stages of development. The researchers say it could lead to a new, cheap and easy way to help diagnose malaria.

The prototype breathalyzer detects six different odours or chemical compounds to spot instances of malaria. The researchers did tests on 35 children in Malawi. They took breath samples using the breathalyzer to test the accuracy of the machine. It accurately identified 29 of the children as having malaria. This was a success rate of 83 per cent. Lead researcher Audrey Odom John said: "It's clear that if we had fast, easy-to-use, reliable diagnostic devices...we could reduce unnecessary antibiotic use. This would have a major impact on the control of malaria, because all current diagnostic methods require blood sampling." Malaria currently kills around 430,000 a year around the world.