



Vector Control Working Group

Anopheles stephensi focus meetings (December 2021 and February 2022) outputs

April 2022

VCWG Co-Chairs and Secretariat

Why did we host those two meetings?

- *Anopheles stephensi* in Africa is not ‘news’ ... despite various regular meetings and focus groups there still seems to be some communication gaps – can we afford that?
- In the VCWG 2021 Virtual Annual Meeting *Anopheles stephensi* was a dominant topic:
 - Expressions of interest for Task Force in Workstream 3
 - General reflection of lack of visibility, some perception (right or wrong) of lack of ‘connection of the dots’ and feedback that this also needs other RBM Groups involved (e.g. MSWG).
- The focus meetings were therefore intended as firstly a ‘landscaping’ exercise and from that to better understand how VCWG should play a complementary role.

Observations from VCWG *An stephensi* meetings:

- Inadequacy of surveillance systems to detect the extent of the threat.
- Lack of robust evidence demonstrating a clear link between invasion of the vector and increase in malaria burden; challenge for justifying reallocation of finite resources towards a threat with unknown disease significance.
- Need for a change of policies (not just in health) towards a more accelerated response; concern that the mosquito vector will have become established in Africa by the time evidence of connection to increased malaria incidence becomes available, and it will be too late.
- Gaps in understanding how this mosquito is spread and its behaviour.
- More guidance needed on interventions to apply beyond LLINs and IRS
- Balancing urgency for action with the slow time it takes to effect policy change. Consider how to bring about change faster for the affected countries.

Organisations represented at both meetings

Organisations		
ALMA	LSHTM	SADC-E8
APMEN	LSTM	CHAI
Armauer Hansen Research Institute	Mentor Initiative	UCSF
BMGF	Manhica	Swiss TPH
US-CDC	MRC South Africa	USAID-PMO
The Global Fund	Oxford University	WHO AFRO & EMRO
IHI	PAMCA	WHO GMP
IVCC	PMI VectorLink	Wits University

At end of the February Meeting we set ourselves the following objectives

- ✓ Streamline the key considerations for the VCWG identified from the first meeting.
- ✓ Lay the foundations towards the creation of VCWG task teams under work stream 3
- ✓ Identify activities and TOR that could be considered for the Task Team

Observations from *Anopheles stephensi* focus meetings & conclusions for VCWG ways to support

Status – April 2022

Need identified from prior meetings	Status/Next steps	Area of VCWG Responsibility
1. Increase visibility of capacity building efforts already underway by other organisations (e.g. WHO, PMI etc)	Approach made to VectorHub as existing platform to support this. In progress under responsibility of Workstream .	Within workstream
2. Identify research gaps and support broader visibility of research groups working on this topic.	In progress. MESA Track already approached to track research on An.stephensi. Item on agenda for May 5 th Meeting for WS-Task Team co-ordination and follow-up.	Within workstream
3. Identify tools/approaches which are relevant to tackling Stephensi. Obtain insights from Asian countries dealing with this problem; share across VCWG Membership.	Follow up from December meeting on local guidelines adopted from India. PMI Documents already provided (to be shared further)	VCWG Secretariat

Observations from last meetings on Anopheles stephensi and conclusions for VCWG ways to support

Status – April 2022

Need identified from prior meetings	Status/Next Steps	VCWG Responsibility
4. Engage other sectors beyond health and VC – develop a VCWG led consensus statement which is signed onto by key organisations	First steps under way.	VCWG Co-Chairs
5. Encourage higher level political motivation to recognize the urgency and mobilise alternative funding sources beyond malaria vector control. Consider a VCWG position statement.	Links to previous item	VCWG Co-chairs
6. Explore funding opportunities in combination with broader urban malaria threat and Aedes control.	Considered as out of scope of VCWG. Discuss further with other RBM functions.	Not applicable
7. Explore what learnings there may be from other bodies dealing with invasive species in other fields (e.g. weeds, mammals and other insects).	Co-Chairs to reach out to bodies dealing with such threats – if seen as valuable then contacts brought into VCWG Leadership to identify next steps.	VCWG Co-Chairs