

TASK 2



Research jointly supported by the ESRC and DFID

Instructions

This test was designed to assess your critical thinking, analytic reasoning and problem solving skills. The results of this assessment will be used in a research study, so your work will remain anonymous and will not be seen by anybody at your university. Please try your best! Our results will only be meaningful if you complete the test to the best of your ability.

Test Format

In this assessment, you are asked to imagine that you are in a fictional but realistic situation. You have been given a series of seven documents that represent a range of different types of information, and you will need to use the information in the documents to support your written responses.

You should base your responses *only on the evidence provided in these documents*. Responses that only reference personal experience cannot be assessed!

Test Logistics

In this booklet, you will find a description of the situation, as well as all of the documents. You have also received a second answer booklet where you should write your responses.

Please do not make any notes on this booklet when planning your answers, as we need to use it again. There is extra paper available if you would like to make some notes.

You have 90 minutes to complete this assessment.

The Situation

Imagine that you have started an internship at the Ministry of Health (MOH). Your role at the Ministry is to assist the planning officer responsible for malaria programs.

One of the government's central priorities is reducing the number of deaths due to malaria in Kenya. The president and the Parliament have pledged to reduce the number of deaths due to malaria by 50% in the next two years. If they are successful, Kenya would be the first country in Africa to achieve such a dramatic reduction in malaria fatalities.

However, the government is suffering from a budget problem. There is not enough money available to implement the entirety of the government's plan to achieve the 50% reduction target. The Parliament is now debating what to do to meet the government's goals.

The Parliamentary Working Group on Malaria Prevention, led by Mr. Joseph Baki, has argued that the available money should be used to fund training sessions with pregnant women to teach them how to prevent their children from contracting malaria.

Another group within Parliament, led by Mrs. Grace Odwad, disagrees. They believe that the money should be used to buy one treated mosquito net per household in Kenya. This group has argued that trainings actually increase the number of deaths due to malaria and claim that providing treated bed nets is the best solution for reducing malaria fatalities.

There is a vote scheduled on this issue next week. In advance of the vote, Parliament has asked your supervisor for a report that evaluates the two proposed policies.

Your Task

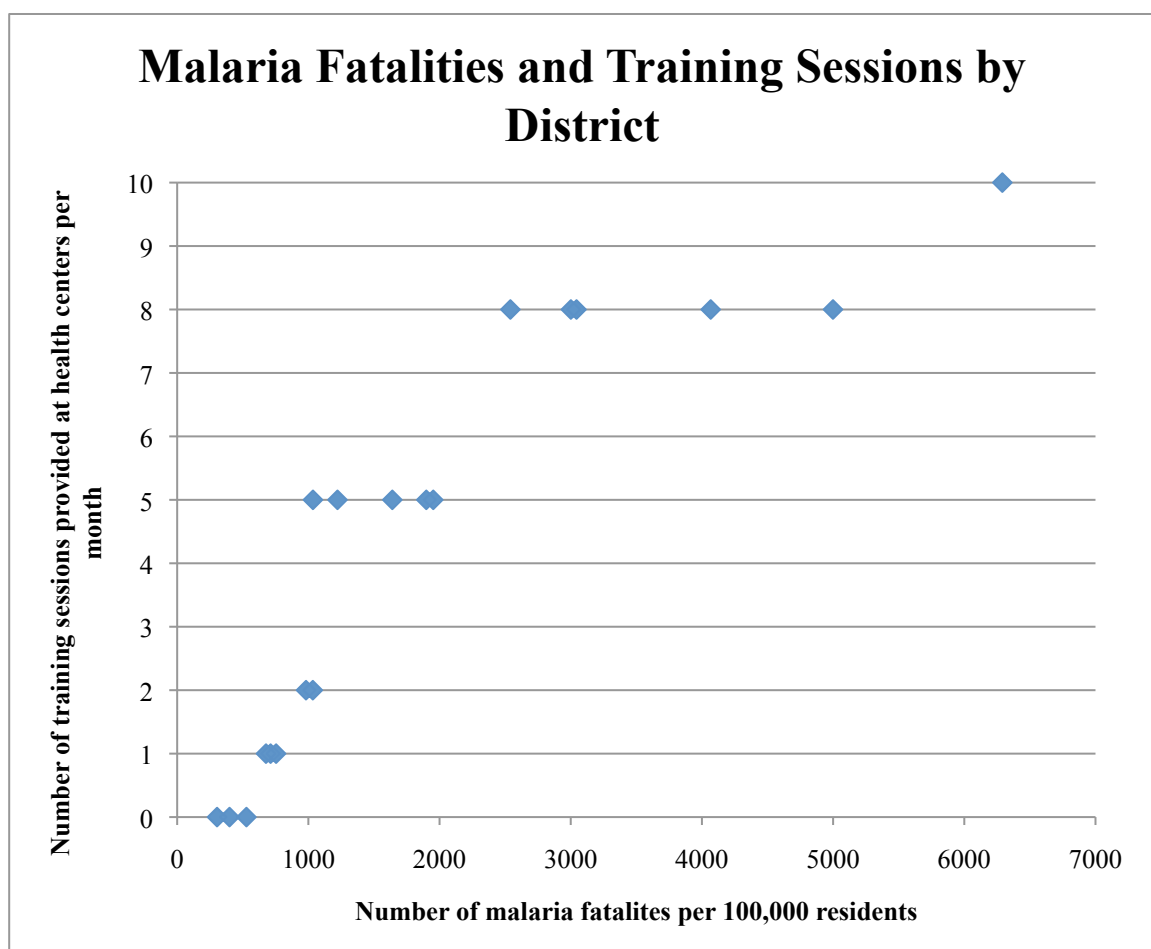
The report must address the strengths and limitations of the two policies proposed by the members of Parliament, so your supervisor has asked you to conduct some research on the two options. You identified seven documents, which are found on the following pages.

Your supervisor has asked you to **spend the next ninety minutes reviewing the documents and responding to a number of questions**. He will use your responses as the basis of his report to Parliament.

DOCUMENT A

Malaria Education Data from Ethiopia

The chart below was created by a non-profit organization based in Ethiopia. It shows the relationship between the average number of malaria prevention training sessions provided by district health centers each month and the number of malaria fatalities per 100,000 residents in the district. Each point on the chart represents one of the districts that participated in the Ethiopian Malaria Conference in Addis Ababa in 2012.





Local company succeeds in obtaining WHO approval for mosquito bed nets

The World Health Organization (WHO) has announced it will add the Kenyan-made *No More Mosquitoes* bed net brand to the WHO approval list of mosquito nets that can be distributed by foreign aid agencies. The acceptance of *No More Mosquitoes* represents the first time that an African company has succeeded in producing a line of bed nets to obtain WHO approval.

The No More Mosquitoes brand is manufactured by IKNU, a Kenyan company that has been in business since 2001. The company specializes in producing fabric, netting and other woven products. The company's president, Mr. Robert Odwad, is the husband of Mrs. Grace Odwad, who has served as a Member of Parliament since 2007.

SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY
Research Brief

Study shows provision of treated nets can reduce malaria deaths

A recent study sponsored by the South African Institute for Public Health Policy has found that the provision of insecticide-treated mosquito nets can help to dramatically reduce the number of deaths due to malaria.

The study was carried out in the city of Anytown in the Western Cape. Last year, the city decided to triple the number of free bed nets it distributed to low-income families.

The number of deaths due to malaria has dropped dramatically since the initiative began. Last year, there were 6 fatalities in the city due to malaria. This year, there were only 2. This represents a 60% reduction in malaria deaths since the city increased its provision of bed nets.

Research has shown that malaria can be prevented through regular, accurate use of insecticide-treated mosquito nets. By providing nets free of charge to low-income families, Anytown has taken control of its malaria fatality problem.

DOCUMENT D



BLOG

On that Thursday I visited, Nana had been at the center since the morning. After lunch, the team leader took Nana home. When the team leader and Nana reached home, the boy's father was sitting in the shadow of one of the two huts that compose the household.

Some months ago, Nana's family was going through hard times. Nana was sick from malaria. It was harvest time, and Nana's father was totally short of money and could not pay for any treatment. "The Compassion development center paid for all medical fees, fortunately. Otherwise, I would have needed to borrow some money from a friend of mine to treat my child," Nana's father says.

When in September 2008 the student center workers informed Nana's parents and all the registered children's parents that their children were going to receive mosquito nets, it was such a relief to at last get one of the most reliable prevention methods of malaria.

The mosquito net that Nana received was the very first net of the family and is the only one that they have to this day.

Before the mosquito net distribution, there were many children falling sick from malaria – so much so that the center was spending more money than was allocated to health.

"With mosquito nets and sensitization campaigns that we launched, we now have less and less registered children suffering from malaria," a development center team leader says.

Thanks to malaria intervention, Nana was treated and recovered from malaria. Now he sleeps under a mosquito net, happy to be out of the reach of mosquitoes.

DOCUMENT E



Malaria fatalities and use of bed nets in Kenya

The two tables below present data about malaria fatalities in Kenya. The information found in Table 1 is presented in chart format in Document F.

TABLE 1: MALARIA FATALITIES BY REGION

Province	Percentage of households lacking mosquito bed nets	Number of deaths due to malaria in 2009	Total population	Number of deaths due to malaria per 100,000 residents
Nairobi City	5%	112	3,138,369	3.57
Central Kenya	12%	652	6,383,743	10.21
Eastern Kenya	14%	930	5,668,123	16.41
Western Kenya, Nyanza & the Rift Valley	15%	1,962	17,783,798	11.5
Northeastern Kenya & the Coast	8%	561	5,636,064	9.95

TABLE 2: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS BY REGION

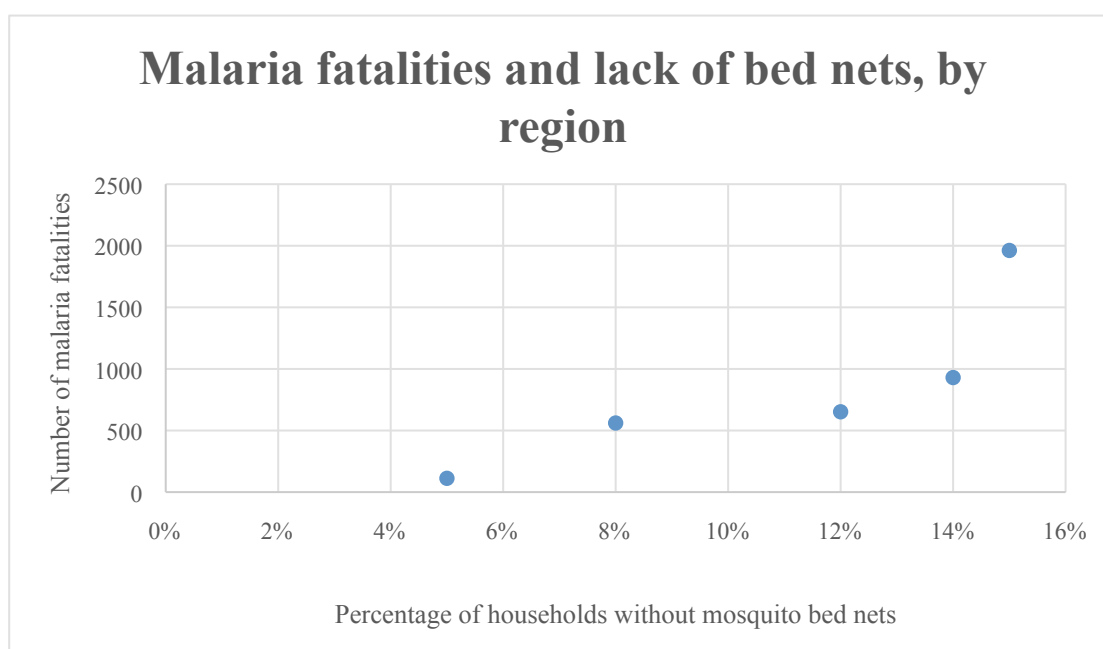
Province	Percentage of households lacking mosquito bed nets	Percentage of adult residents in the region who are employed
Nairobi City	5%	72%
Central Kenya	15%	85%
Eastern Kenya	12%	84%
Western Kenya, Nyanza & the Rift Valley	14%	85%
Northeastern Kenya & the Coast	8%	90%



**PREVENTION
INTERNATIONAL**

Malaria fatalities and use of bed nets in Kenya: Chart

This chart is based on the data found in Document E.



DOCUMENT G

Results of Online Search for Research Studies



Mosquito nets and reduced malaria deaths

Search

Combating malaria: A systematic review of malaria prevention policies in Africa

D Smith – The American Journal of Public Health, 2001 – JSTOR

...In this analysis, Smith examines a number of evaluations of malaria prevention policies in Africa. Although the majority of the studies demonstrated that provision of free bed nets has played a critical role in reducing the number of malaria fatalities in the region, many also raised the possibility that bed nets are still not well understood in rural areas. Some studies indicated that donated nets are not always used as bed nets. Others identified that nets were used irregularly or inaccurately, which reduced their effectiveness in combating the disease...

Can nets make a difference? The case of southwestern Uganda

J Busingye – Uganda Health Report, 2008 – African Journals Online

...This study sought to analyze the potential for providing free mosquito nets as a prevention strategy for reducing malaria fatalities in southwestern Uganda. Researchers conducted focus groups and interviews with public health workers and medical personnel across the region. Participants were asked to discuss their perceptions of the primary causes of malaria, based on their discussions with infected patients. Although many participants did mention that those infected with malaria often lacked access to bed nets, the majority also highlighted other factors that contribute to the epidemic, including the geographic location of houses, lack of access to treatment and widespread reliance on traditional medicine to cure disease...

Your Supervisor's Questions

Now that you have reviewed the documents, you must respond to your supervisor's questions:

1. The group of politicians led by Mrs. Odwad has argued that trainings will not help the problem, because trainings actually cause an *increase* in malaria fatalities. They have referred to Document A as proof of their argument.
 - a. Based on the evidence in Document A only, do you think it is reasonable to claim that trainings cause an increase in malaria fatalities? Please explain the reasons for your answer.
2. Mrs. Odwad's group has argued that spending the available money on free bed nets will allow the government to reduce malaria fatalities in Kenya by the desired 50%.
 - a. Based on the evidence available in all of the documents, do you agree with Mrs. Odwad's argument? Explain your answer in terms of the strengths and limitations of her position.
3. You have been asked by the Minister to prepare an alternative solution to Mrs. Odwad's option (the bed nets), to be used in the Ministry's consultations. The alternative can be the option proposed by Mr. Baki (offering training sessions), or it can be a different solution entirely.
 - a. Please outline your alternative solution, explaining why you consider it to be the best option, based on the evidence in the documents.

Your responses should include all of the relevant evidence necessary to support your positions.

Please explain and justify the reasons for your conclusions by referring only to the information included in the documents.

Please be explicit about which document you are discussing and explain why you selected to reference the evidence that you selected.

Your response will be assessed on the accuracy of the information you provide and the strength of your argument.

Please write your answers in the answer booklet provided.

Thank you very much for your assistance with this study!