For Children, HIV Increases Risk of Death From Malaria

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HIV-positive children are more likely than those without the virus to die from severe malaria, The New York Times reports. Publishing their findings in the journal mBio, researchers studied 3,000 children in Malawi who had cerebral malaria and entered comas.

The study included the results of autopsies of more than 100 children who died of cerebral malaria. About 20 percent of these children had HIV, which was a much higher infection rate than is seen among Malawian children on the whole.

The researchers found that small blood vessels in the brains of these HIV-positive children with malaria were clogged more thickly with platelets and immune cells than the blood vessels of the HIV-negative children with malaria. The researchers concluded that HIV increased the likelihood that children who contracted malaria would develop fatal inflammation and blood clotting. Consequently, they recommended that physicians take measures to protect HIV-positive children from malaria, and to give anti-inflammatory and anti-clotting drugs to those who do contract the disease.

To read the New York Times article, click here.

To read the study abstract, click here.

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