

Editor's Comment:

The difficulty I have with this paper is that the basic aim of the study is unclear (not described). It appears to me that the original title provided by the authors was accurate in that the paper is about changes in malaria cases in the area over the stated time period, i.e., number of new cases each year = incidence. However, reviewer No. 1 urged the authors to change the term incidence to prevalence without explaining why the change was needed. The authors accepted this and changed the terms in the paper, except in the final paragraph (conclusion) where they used incidence.

The same reviewer also asked the authors to drop the term bednet and instead use net alone. However, bednet is a more descriptive and accepted term than net (insecticide treated nets) alone.

The authors should clarify the aim of the study and base their conclusions on those aims. If they are studying changes in cases over time, then incidence is the appropriate term. Prevalence refers to the total number of cases existing at a particular time, which is a more appropriate term for chronic illnesses, which do not have an acute onset and last many years. Prevalence is also the appropriate term when studying the overall burden of a disease.

The authors did not clarify their study aims and did not address the question to whether they are studying incidence or prevalence. They should also revert back to using bednet, in my opinion.

If the authors would clarify their aims and decide which is the appropriate term for their study -- incidence or prevalence -- i would concur with the other reviewers in accepting the paper.

Editor's Details:

Anthony R. Mawson
Public Health & Director Institute of Epidemiology & Health Services Research, Jackson State
University, USA