

*Background & objectives:* Malaria healthcare policy change in Kenya aimed at improving the control of malaria but faced a number of challenges in implementation related to marketing of the drugs. This research investigated the effect of the change of the national malaria policy on drug sales and strategic marketing responses of antimalarial pharmaceutical companies in Kenya.

*Study design:* A descriptive cross-sectional design was employed to describe the existing state of antimalarials market in Kenya after the change of the malaria healthcare policy.

*Results & conclusion:* Policy change did result in an increase in the sales of Coartem®. Novartis Pharma recorded a 97% growth in sales of Coartem® between 2003 and 2004. However, this increase was not experienced by all the companies. Further, SPs (which had been replaced as first-line therapy for malaria) registered good sales. In most cases, these sales were higher than the sales of Coartem®. Generally, the sales contribution of SPs and generic antimalarial medicines exceeded that of Coartem® for most distributors. The most common change made to marketing strategies by distributors (62.5%) was to increase imports of antimalarials. A total of 40% of the manufacturers preferred to increase their budgetary allocation for marketing activities. In view of the fact that continued sale of SP drugs and limited availability of AL poses the risk of increasing the incidence of malaria in Kenya, it is therefore, recommended that pharmacy surveillance systems be strengthened to ensure drugs that have been rendered non-viable or that prescription-only medicines are not sold contrary to the national guidelines.