Is COVID-19 the same with Malaria?
CLAIM: There have been various claims that the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) is the same as malaria.

VERDICT: False

FACT: COVID-19 and malaria are two different ailments, although they sometimes present the same symptoms on patients who have contracted the diseases.

CAUSES

While the novel virus (severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2, SARS-CoV-2) causes COVID-19, malaria is caused by Plasmodium parasites, which spread to humans through bites from female Anopheles mosquitoes.

SYMPTOMS

Malaria and COVID-19 usually present the same symptoms, including fever, dry cough and pneumonia, aches and pains, sore throats, headache.

However, COVID-19, on severe occasions, patients show symptoms of diarrhea, loss of taste or smell, chest pain or pressure, difficulty, and loss of speech or movement.

The World Health Organisation (WHO), in its guideline, asserted that the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and malaria could overlap.

The WHO also warns that public health messages will need to be adapted in malaria-endemic settings (like Nigeria). As such, people who have a fever are encouraged to seek immediate treatment rather than stay at home; without prompt treatment as a mild case of malaria can rapidly progress to severe illness and death.

"Countries should not scale back efforts to detect and treat malaria; doing so would seriously undermine the health and well-being of millions of people infected with a potentially life-threatening disease," the organization said.
PREVENTION

To prevent infection and to slow transmission of COVID-19, an individual is required to wash his or her hands regularly with soap and water or clean them with alcohol-based hand rub. Furthermore, you should maintain at least 1 to 2 metres distance between yourself and other people coughing or sneezing, and, lastly, avoid touching your face and cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.

Also, you are required to stay at home if you feel unwell, desist from smoking, and other activities that weaken the lungs and practice physical distancing by avoiding unnecessary travel and staying away from large groups of people.

However, we can prevent transmission of malaria when individuals in areas prone to the parasite sleep under an insecticide-treated mosquito net, clear all living areas of stagnant water, and ensure good environmental hygiene.

TREATMENT

While there are approved treatments for malaria, there is no cure for Coronavirus disease.

CONCLUSION

There is a difference between COVID-19 and malaria. A virus causes coronavirus, while a parasite causes malaria.

The CDD urges members of the public to always verify all information before sharing, especially on WhatsApp, as not all information shared online is genuine.

You can also forward suspicious messages for verification at +2349062910568 or contact us on twitter: @CDDWestAfrica.