

# Halofantrine in the Treatment of Falciparum Malaria

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Madam, The spread of chloroquine resistant malaria in endemic areas has been reported widely<sup>1-3</sup>. Incidence of chloroquine resistance have also been on the rise in Pakistan<sup>4,5</sup> and have necessitated the use of alternative anti-malarials.

Halofantrine hydrochloride is an anti-malarial effective against falciparum and vivax malaria. The efficacy of this drug has been reported in earlier investigations<sup>6-12</sup>. In this study, the efficacy of halofantrine for treatment of falciparum malaria after nine years of general use in Pakistan is described. Seventy hospitalized patients suffering from falciparum malaria were included in the study. Age of the patients ranged from 2-70 years (mean 14.7 years). Diagnosis was confirmed by peripheral film examination and parasitaemia count was calculated as number of red blood cells infected per thousand blood cells. Laboratory investigations included complete CP, urine DR, liver function tests and blood urea. Temperature was recorded before start of treatment and then every 4 hours for 7 days.

Parasitaemia count was monitored before start of treatment and then daily for 7 days. Patient follow up was carried out for four weeks. Symptoms observed in patients included fever (70 patients), chills with paroxysms (45 patients) and splenomegaly (24 patients).

Adults were given three doses of halofantrine 500 mg at six hourly intervals and children were given three doses of 8 mg per kg body weight at 6 hourly intervals. 2 patients suffering from cerebral malaria were not treated with Halfan. Parasite count was reduced significantly within 24 hours of treatment in 68 patients. Six cases showed parasitaemia even after 72 hours of treatment but parasitaemia was cleared in all patients after 96 hours. Nearly 50% of patients were afebrile after 40 hours. All 68 patients were afebrile within 80 hours.

No serious side effects were observed. Vomiting after start of treatment was reported in 6 patients but generally halofantrine was well tolerated. Relapse was not seen in any patient during follow up. Our results indicate that halofantrine is an effective drug for treatment of falciparum malaria.

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