

## Letter to the Editor

# Comments on “Clinical profile of neural tube defects in Sudanese children: Is malaria a risk factor?”

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Dear Editor,

I have read, with great interest, the article “Clinical profile of neural tube defects in Sudanese children: Is malaria a risk factor?” and I have to congratulate the authors on this work [1]. However, it was mentioned that “This was a prospective cross-sectional study” (page 37 in the METHODS). Then, the details of the results were shown. It is clear that this was not a cross-sectional study but it was a descriptive one.

Then, authors mentioned that “Some diseases such as febrile illnesses during the first trimester including malaria were recorded. Malaria was reported in 18 mothers (25.4%), 23.9% of these mothers received anti-malarial drugs.” Unfortunately, because of the nature of the study itself (descriptive study and not a cross-sectional one), the figure (25.4%) has no significant value. Perhaps if a proper cross-sectional study or

case control study was conducted, the controls (mothers of newborns who had no neural tube defects) could have equal exposure to malaria or its treatment. It is clear that one could not get odds ratio or relative risk. Furthermore, it was a retrospective study where investigators depend on the mother’s recall for the event far away in the history (first trimester) and this event could not be judged accurately.

Thanks

Ishag Adam

## REFERENCES

1. Sadik B, Babikir HE, Arbab MAR. Clinical profile of neural tube defects in Sudanese children: is malaria a risk factor? Sudan J Paediatr. 2017;17(1):36–41.

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