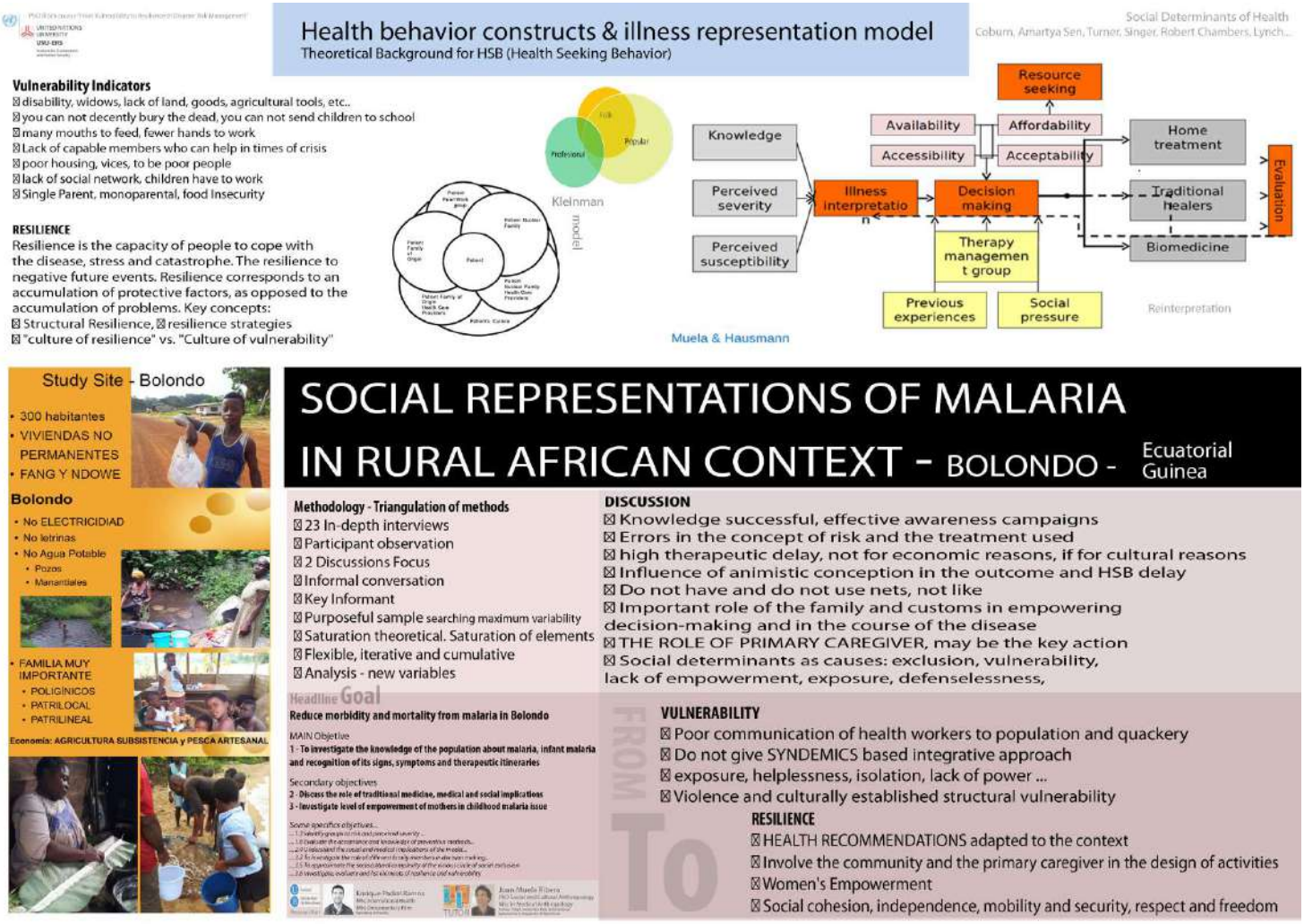
SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS OF MALARIA

In the Kombe rural population of Bolondo, Provincia Litorial Guinea Ecuatorial 2015



Abstract

Reduce mortality in children under 5 years is the goal of control programs for malaria. Understanding the socio-cultural aspects is essential to implement effective low cost solutions.

The purpose of this exploratory work by studying the social representations of malaria in Bolondo (a small coastal community in sub-Saharan Africa), have 3 aims: 1- learn the causes of therapeutic delay in case of fever due to malaria in children under 5 years. 2- discuss the role of traditional medicine 3- assess the level of mothers´s empowerment.

The data analysis methods developed by triangulation, identifies patterns of behaviour in the primary carers influencing survival. The data comes from a purposeful sample of 23 semi-structured in-depth interviews to mothers who came to the clinic with children under 5 years with fever and diagnosed with positive malaria, 7 key informants, 2 focal discussions and numerous conversations informal interviews, the sample closes with elements saturation.

Respondents properly identify malaria symptoms and signs of severe malaria, recognise a therapeutic delay from 2 to 5 days, lists some preventive measures and establish multiple levels of causation that require different types of treatment that includes western and traditional medicine.

The study concludes that risk perception influences decision making by primary caregivers, reflecting itself in the therapeutic delay and the choice of itinerary health. Relevant drivers for survival are the level of empowerment of mothers, perceived susceptibility, and risk assessment. The identification of such behavioural patterns allow to design more effective action in terms of public health impact and sustainability.

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