

**DIHYDROFOLATE REDUCTASE GENE MUTATIONS IN *Plasmodium falciparum* AMONG SYMPTOMATIC PATIENTS IN OTA, OGUN STATE, NIGERIA**

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**AUGUST, 2024**

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**BY**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE MASTER OF SCIENCE (M.Sc) DEGREE IN MICROBIOLOGY IN THE DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES, COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, COVENANT UNIVERSITY, OTA, OGUN STATE, NIGERIA**

**AUGUST, 2024**

## **ACCEPTANCE**

This is to attest that this dissertation is accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Master of Science (M.Sc) degree in Microbiology in the Department of Biological Sciences, College of Science and Technology, Covenant University, Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria.

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## **DECLARATION**

I **MAMEH, EMMANUEL OJOCHEGBE (22PCQ02459)** declare that this research was carried out by me under the supervision of Prof. Solomon U. Oranusi of the Department of Biological Sciences, College of Science and Technology, Covenant University, Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria. I attest that the dissertations have not been presented wholly or partially for the award of any degree elsewhere. All sources of data and scholarly information used in this dissertation are duly acknowledged.

**MAMEH, EMMANUEL OJOCHEGBE**

**Signature and Date**

## **CERTIFICATION**

We certify that this dissertation titled “**DIHYDROFOLATE REDUCTASE GENE MUTATIONS IN *Plasmodium falciparum* AMONG SYMPTOMATIC PATIENTS IN OTA, OGUN STATE, NIGERIA**” is an original research work carried out by **MAMEH, EMMANUEL OJOCHEGBE** (22PCQ02459) in the Department of Biological Sciences, College of Science and Technology, covenant University, Ota, Ogun State Nigeria under the supervision of Prof. Solomon U. Oranusi. We have examined this work and found this work acceptable as part of the requirements for the award of Master of Science in Microbiology.

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## **DEDICATION**

This research work is dedicated to the Lord Almighty, the source of wisdom, knowledge and understanding. Then to my family for their moral and financial supports.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

| <b>CONTENTS</b>                          | <b>PAGES</b> |
|--|--------------|
| <b>COVER PAGE</b>                        | <b>i</b>     |
| <b>TITLE PAGE</b>                        | <b>ii</b>    |
| <b>ACCEPTANCE</b>                        | <b>iii</b>   |
| <b>DECLARATION</b>                       | <b>iv</b>    |
| <b>CERTIFICATION</b>                     | <b>v</b>     |
| <b>DEDICATION</b>                        | <b>vi</b>    |
| <b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>                  | <b>vii</b>   |
| <b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>                 | <b>viii</b>  |
| <b>LIST OF TABLES</b>                    | <b>xii</b>   |
| <b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>                   | <b>xiii</b>  |
| <b>LIST OF PLATES</b>                    | <b>xiv</b>   |
| <b>ABBREVIATIONS</b>                     | <b>xv</b>    |
| <b>ABSTRACT</b>                          | <b>xvii</b>  |
| <br>                                     |              |
| <b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</b>         | <b>1</b>     |
| 1.1 Background of study                  | 1            |
| 1.2 Statement of research problem        | 3            |
| 1.3 Research questions                   | 3            |
| 1.4 Aim of the study                     | 4            |
| 1.5 Objectives of the study              | 4            |
| 1.6 Justification of study               | 4            |
| 1.7 Scope of the study                   | 4            |
| <br>                                     |              |
| <b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW</b>    | <b>6</b>     |
| 2.1 Malaria overview                     | 6            |
| 2.2 Epidemiology of falciparum malaria   | 8            |
| 2.3 Populations at risk of malaria fever | 9            |
| 2.3.1 Children under five years of age   | 9            |
| 2.3.2 Pregnant women                     | 9            |
| 2.3.3 Travelers to endemic areas         | 10           |



|  |    |
|--|----|
| 2.3.4 Immigrants or refugees   | 10 |
| 2.3.5 Immunocompromised individuals  | 10 |
| 2.4 Life Cycle of <i>Plasmodium falciparum</i>   | 10 |
| 2.4.1 Pathogenesis of malaria infection  | 11 |
| 2.4.2 Host defense against malaria   | 12 |
| 2.4.3 Symptoms and complications of malaria fever  | 12 |
| 2.4.4 Laboratory diagnosis of malaria fever  | 13 |
| 2.4.5 Treatment of malaria fever   | 13 |
| 2.5 Classes of antimalarial drugs and their mode of action   | 14 |
| 2.5.1 Quinine and its derivatives  | 14 |
| 2.5.2 Antifolate-based combinations  | 14 |
| 2.5.3 Artemisinin drug compounds   | 15 |
| 2.5.4 Antibiotics  | 16 |
| 2.6 Combination therapy with antimalarials   | 16 |
| 2.7 Antimalarial drug resistance and their timelines   | 17 |
| 2.7.1 Resistance gene according to antimalarial drugs  | 22 |
| 2.7.1.1 <i>Plasmodium falciparum</i> chloroquine resistance transporter gene ( <i>Pfcr1</i> )  | 22 |
| 2.7.1.2 <i>Plasmodium falciparum</i> multi-drug resistance 1 gene ( <i>Pfmdr1</i> )  | 23 |
| 2.7.1.3 <i>Plasmodium falciparum</i> multidrug resistance protein-1 gene ( <i>Pfmrp1</i> )   | 24 |
| 2.7.1.4 <i>Plasmodium falciparum</i> Na <sup>+</sup> /H <sup>+</sup> exchanger-1 ( <i>Pfnhe-1</i> )  | 24 |
| 2.7.1.5 <i>Plasmodium falciparum</i> cytochrome b gene ( <i>Pfct b</i> )   | 25 |
| 2.7.1.6 <i>Plasmodium falciparum</i> kelch13 gene ( <i>Pfk13</i> )   | 25 |
| 2.7.1.7 <i>P. Falciparum</i> dihydrofolate reductase gene ( <i>Pfdhfr</i> ) and <i>P.falciparum</i> dihydropterote synthase gene ( <i>Pfhgps</i> ) | 27 |

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| 2.8 Prevalence of <i>Pfdhfr</i> and <i>Pfdhps</i> gene mutations associated with SP resistance | 28        |
| <b>CHAPTER THREE: MATERIALS AND METHODS</b>  | <b>30</b> |
| 3.1 Materials  | 30        |
| 3.2 Methods  | 30        |
| 3.2.1 Study area   | 30        |
| 3.2.2 Study group  | 31        |
| 3.2.3 Ethical approval   | 31        |
| 3.2.4 Informed consents  | 31        |
| 3.2.4.1 Inclusion criteria   | 31        |
| 3.2.4.2 Exclusion criteria   | 31        |
| 3.2.5 Sampling   | 31        |
| 3.3 Sample collection  | 32        |
| 3.4 Microscopy studies   | 32        |
| 3.5 Molecular studies  | 33        |
| 3.5.1 Sample selection for <i>Pfdhfr</i> genotyping  | 33        |
| 3.5.2 DNA extraction   | 33        |
| 3.5.3 Genotyping of <i>Pfdhfr</i> gene for mutations   | 33        |
| 3.5.4 Direct sanger sequencing   | 35        |
| 3.6 Statistical analysis   | 35        |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <b>CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS</b>   | 36 |
| 4.1 Prevalence of <i>Plasmodium falciparum</i> infection among the study population      | 36 |
| 4.2 Distribution of <i>Plasmodium falciparum</i> infection based on gender demography    | 38 |
| 4.3 Distribution of <i>Plasmodium falciparum</i> infection based on age demography       | 40 |
| 4.4 Parasitemia level based on age demography  | 42 |
| 4.5 Regression Analysis of Parasitemia data based on age demography                      | 44 |
| 4.6 <i>Pfdhfr</i> genotype distribution among different age group                        | 46 |
| 4.7 Agarose Gel Electrophoresis Results For PCR  | 48 |
| 4.8 Phylogenetic analysis of <i>Pfdhfr</i> genotypes with African strains                | 50 |
| 4.9 Clonal diversity of identified <i>Pfdhfr</i> strains with global identified strains  | 52 |
| <br>   |    |
| <b>CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION</b>  | 54 |
| 5.1 Discussion   | 54 |
| <br>   |    |
| <b>CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION</b>  | 59 |
| 6.1 Summary  | 59 |
| 6.2 Conclusion   | 59 |
| 6.3 Contributions to knowledge   | 60 |
| 6.4 Recommendation   | 60 |
| <br>   |    |
| <b>REFERENCES</b>  | 61 |
| <br>   |    |
| <b>APPENDIX 1: Distribution of falciparum malaria based on age and gender demography</b> | 73 |
| <b>APPENDIX 2: Regression analysis of parasitemia based on age demography</b>            | 74 |
| <b>APPENDIX 2: Evidence of ethical approval</b>  | 75 |

## LIST OF TABLES

| <b>TABLES</b> | <b>LIST OF TABLES</b>  | <b>PAGES</b> |
|---------------|--|--------------|
| 2.1           | Antimalarial resistance and timelines  | 19           |
| 3.1           | Working solutions  | 34           |
| 3.2           | Primer sequences and PCR amplification<br>Conditions                                 | 34           |
| 4.1           | Distribution of <i>Plasmodium falciparum</i><br>infection based on gender demography | 39           |
| 4.2           | Distribution of <i>Plasmodium falciparum</i><br>based on age demography              | 41           |
| 4.3           | Parasitemia level based on age<br>demography   | 43           |
| 4.4           | Regression analysis of parasitemia based<br>on age demography                        | 45           |
| 4.5           | <i>Pfdhfr</i> genotype distribution among<br>different age group                     | 47           |

## LIST OF FIGURES

| FIGURES | LIST OF FIGURES   | PAGES |
|---------|---|-------|
| 2.1     | Life stages in <i>Plasmodium falciparum</i> ; malaria parasite                        | 11    |
| 2.2     | Schematic representation of <i>Pfcrt</i> and positions of identified mutations        | 23    |
| 2.3     | Schematic representation of K13 and its human orthologist KEAP1                       | 26    |
| 2.4     | Assumed mechanisms of susceptibility and resistance of <i>P. falciparum</i>           | 27    |
| 3.1     | Geographic map of Nigeria indicating Ado-Odo Otta local government area in Ogun State | 30    |
| 4.1     | Prevalence of <i>Plasmodium falciparum</i> infection among the study population       | 37    |
| 4.2     | Phylogenetic analysis of Nigerian <i>Pfdhfr</i> strains with African strains          | 51    |
| 4.3     | Clonal diversity of identified <i>Pfdhfr</i> strains with global identified strains   | 53    |

## LIST OF PLATE

**PLATE**

4.1

**TITLE**

Gel Plate for PCR

**PAGE**

49

## ABBREVIATIONS

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| <b>WHO</b>      | World Health Organization  |
| <b>COVID-19</b> | Coronavirus disease 2019   |
| <b>ACT</b>      | Artemisinin-based combination therapies                              |
| <b>AQ-AS</b>    | Amodiaquine- artesunate  |
| <b>AL</b>       | Arthemether-lumefantrine   |
| <b>SP</b>       | Sulfadoxine-pyrimethamine  |
| <b>PF</b>       | <i>Plasmodium falciparum</i>   |
| <b>PFDHFR</b>   | <i>Plasmodium falciparum dihydrofolate reductase gene</i>            |
| <b>PFDHPS</b>   | <i>Plasmodium falciparum dihydropteroate synthase gene</i>           |
| <b>PFCRT</b>    | <i>Plasmodium falciparum chloroquine resistance transporter gene</i> |
| <b>PFMDR-1</b>  | <i>Plasmodium falciparum multidrug resistance-1 gene</i>             |
| <b>ITBNs</b>    | Insecticide-treated bed nets   |
| <b>IRS</b>      | Indoor residual spray  |
| <b>NMEP</b>     | National malaria elimination programme                               |
| <b>HIV</b>      | Human Immuno-deficiency Virus  |
| <b>AIDS</b>     | Acquired Immuno-deficiency Syndrome                                  |
| <b>HRP</b>      | Histidine-rich protein   |
| <b>PQ</b>       | Primaquine   |
| <b>PYR</b>      | Pyrimethamine  |
| <b>CQ</b>       | Chloroquine  |
| <b>QN</b>       | Quinine  |
| <b>MQ</b>       | Mefloquine   |
| <b>ATQ</b>      | Atovaquone   |
| <b>DHA</b>      | Dihydroartemisin   |
| <b>TCT</b>      | Triple combination therapies   |
| <b>NGS</b>      | Next generation sequencing   |
| <b>SNP</b>      | Single nucleotide polymorphism                                       |

|            |                           |
|------------|---------------------------|
| <b>RDT</b> | Rapid diagnostic test     |
| <b>PCR</b> | Polymerase chain reaction |
| <b>SS</b>  | Sanger sequencing         |
| <b>WGS</b> | Whole genome sequencing   |



## ABSTRACT

Malaria significantly impacts global populations, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, where *Plasmodium falciparum* predominates. The spread of drug-resistant parasites encoded with dihydrofolate reductase (*Pfdhfr*) gene complicates treatment, necessitating strategies for effective disease management and control. The study aimed to evaluate the prevalence of *Plasmodium falciparum* infection and patterns of dihydrofolate reductase (*Pfdhfr*) gene mutations among symptomatic patients in healthcare centers in Ota, Nigeria. Employing a cross-sectional study design with random sampling, blood samples were collected from a total of 300 symptomatic subjects diagnosed of malaria. Thin and thick blood films were prepared and examined microscopically for malaria parasite detection and speciation. Parasitemia was determined and *Plasmodium falciparum* was genotyped for *Pfdhfr* genes using standard methods. Genotyped *Pfdhfr* blood samples were sequenced and analysed for clonal diversity with global genotyped strains. Of the samples collected, 132 (44%) were positive for *P. falciparum* with a higher rate observed in males 71(52.2%) than females 61(37.2%). The age group 11-20 years had the significant high infection rates 58(68.2%) while population >60years had the least 5(20.8%) ( $p<0.05$ ). Genotyped *Pfdhfr* among *Plasmodium falciparum* positive cases were 34.8% (46/132), with higher rates observed in 21-30 years (7.6%) and lowest in population >60 years (2.2%). *Pfdhfr* encoded strains from this study clustered with strains identified in Sudan, Nepal, China, and Nigeria. This study highlights the prevalence of *P. falciparum* with *Pfdhfr* gene mutations among the study population. There is need for continuous surveillance and targeted interventions to manage and control malaria, particularly among younger age groups.

**Keywords:** *Plasmodium falciparum*, *Pfdhfr* gene, Malaria, Prevalence, Parasitemia