

[Press Association](#)

Search

Go >

Monday 14th February 2011

PRESS ASSOCIATION

- [Contact Press Association](#)
- [Press Association Ireland](#)
- [Press Association Scotland](#)

- [Home](#)
- [Wire](#)
- [Digital](#)
- [Pages](#)
- [Images](#)
- [Video](#)
- [Sport](#)
- [Entertainment](#)
- [Listings](#)
- [Weather](#)
- [Specialist News](#)
- [PR Services](#)
- [Business Information](#)
- [Training](#)
- [Olympics](#)

- [Mediapoint Wire](#)
- [PR Photography](#)
- [Photo Distribution](#)
- [Press Releases](#)
- [Training](#)
- [TV](#)
- [Radio](#)
- [Video Production](#)
- [Online](#)

- [Scottish News Wire](#)
- [Irish News Wire](#)
- [Health Wire](#)
- [Politics Today](#)

Press Association



Malaria parasites 'good survivors'

Malaria parasites are skilled survivors, developing sophisticated strategies to fight off rival infections, scientists have found.

Malaria, which is spread by mosquito bites, kills around one million people every year and accounts for one in five of all child deaths in Africa. New research has shed light on the ability of the disease to thrive in the human body.

The study by a team at the University of Edinburgh has found its virulent nature owes much to the parasites' competitive streak.

When they enter the bloodstream of their victims, they alter their plan of attack if they face competition from other, competing, strains of the infection. The malaria parasites focus on producing cells that replicate quickly to cause infection, rather than cells capable of being taken up by a feeding mosquito and spreading the disease.

Since malaria infections usually consist of multiple, competing strains of the parasite, this attack strategy is the best way to beat the competition, scientists say.

The parasites pay a high price however, as it means they have fewer resources left to spread the disease.

Laura Pollitt of the School of Biological Sciences said: "Our results explain a long-standing puzzle of parasite behaviour.

"We found that when parasites compete with each other, they respond with a sophisticated strategy to safeguard their long-term survival.

"They opt to fight it out in the bloodstream rather than risk everything on the chance of infecting mosquitoes in the short term."

The research, published in the *American Naturalist*, was funded by the Wellcome Trust, the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council and the Natural Environment Research Council.

Latest Health News

- [**£6.74m for kidney op blunder man**](#)



A man who nearly died during an operation to donate a kidney to his father has won £6.74 million in damages at the High Court.

- [Judge rejects home abortions change](#)



A bid to relax the law on home abortions has been rejected by the High Court.

- [Malaria parasites 'good survivors'](#)



Malaria parasites are skilled survivors, developing sophisticated strategies to fight off rival infections, scientists have found.

- [About Us](#)
- [Press Office](#)
- [Careers](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Terms & Conditions](#)
- [Sitemap](#)

© 2011 Press Association