

# Jet lag may be key to fight against malaria

MALARIA parasites are less effective at causing infection if they are out of sync with their victim's body clock, scientists at a Scottish university have found.

Researchers gave the parasites jet lag by inserting them into mice whose body clocks were different to their own 24-hour cycle.

They studied the malaria infection in mice that had been acclimatised to two daily routines, with some awake in the daytime and others at night.

It was found the parasite was only half as effective at infecting mice whose body clock was different to their own. The parasites' ability to transmit to mosquitoes

who carry the disease was also reduced.

The discovery should help the development of malaria treatments because it gives scientists a greater understanding of when malaria parasites are at their most harmful and when they are vulnerable.

The research was carried out at the universities of Edinburgh and Oxford.

Sarah Reece, of Edinburgh University's school of biological sciences, said: "For this study, we effectively gave the parasites jet lag. Our findings suggest that parasites have developed some clever tricks to get their timing right and cause an infection."

