

MOSQUITO NEEDS MEN

PhD candidate Marieke de Swart needs the blood of 50 men to investigate why the mosquito species *Anopheles coluzzii* – one of the main carriers of the malaria parasite – has a preference for some humans.

Mosquitoes find some people more attractive than others. Sweat and bacteria that turn the sweat into volatile substances for mosquitoes have a role in this process. 'But that still doesn't tell us why. So I am concentrating on the role of the blood itself. Female mosquitoes need blood in order to lay eggs. It seems as if some people's blood is better suited for laying eggs than other people's blood'. The question is what causes this. Her search is focusing on the role of amino acids. 'We know that some amino acids are necessary for the egg laying. Perhaps mosquitos have a preference for blood with higher concentrations of those amino acids.' De Swart is also working with Radboud University to investigate whether the immune system plays a part.

TORMENT

De Swart needs 50 non-smoking, healthy men aged 18-65 who are not overweight (BMI<25). The men will have to donate blood and sweat, and serve as food for 20 hungry female mosquitoes in four sessions of 15 minutes each. That involves resting your forearm on a bucket full of mosquitos. The reward for this torment is 100 euros, plus the knowledge that you are doing it for a good cause. Malaria is still a disease with a lot of victims world-wide. **Ⓡ RK**

