



# Health ministry clarifies on new anti-malarial drug

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THE Ministry of Health has disproved reports that the new anti-malarial drug from China, ARCO, lacks clinical efficacy and safety approval from the World Health Organisation.

Dr. Sam Zaramba, the director general of health services, said ARCO was fully accredited to treat uncomplicated malaria in all age groups.

The drug is made from a combination of artemisinin and naphthoquine. Zaramba said 11 studies have been conducted and they have all shown that the drug is safe for use.

He disclosed that in Uganda, a study was done by Mulago Hospital and Makerere University to compare the efficacy and safety of ARCO to Coartem.

"The study demonstrated that ARCO and Coartem were equally effective in the treatment of uncomplicated malaria and a recommendation was made that ARCO should be considered as an additional first-line drug in the treatment of malaria in Uganda," Zaramba said.

"It is not true that efficacy and safety of ARCO and Duo-Cotexin have not been evaluated. Any drug approved by the National Drug Authority can be used prior to WHO pre-qualification. ARCO has already been registered in Uganda by the NDA, as the WHO pre-qualification continues."

China has been donating ARCO and Duo-Cotexin to Uganda since 2007 for the treatment of malaria.

Zaramba said about one million doses of the drugs have so far been donated to Uganda and are used in regional referral hospitals with no adverse side-effects.

This article can be found on-line at: <http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/13/709688>

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