

Original Research Article

An assessment of the effects of insecticide-treated livestock protective fences (LPF) for protecting humans from anthropophilic mosquitoes and malaria transmission in a suburb of Kumasi in the forest zone of Ghana.

Abstract

Aim: We investigated whether a 100cm high livestock protective fence (LPF), effectively protects humans against anthropophilic mosquitoes and hence malaria.

Study design: Four experimental segregated, half-roofed shelters with concrete floors, each measuring 6m x 7m, separated from each other by 500m, fenced by 100cm high chicken wire, one of them enclosed by an LPF, were used.

Place and Duration of Study: Work done on Boadi Cattle Farm by Kumasi Centre for Collaborative Research in Tropical Medicine, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana, for four weeks.

Methodology: Human landing catches of mosquitoes were conducted twice a week. Two groups of two mosquito collectors worked at each of the four shelters during the same night; one group collected from 1800h to midnight, the second group from midnight to 0600h. One collector collected inside as the other collected outside at a distance of about 20m.

Results and conclusion: Altogether 6118 mosquitoes were collected, 773 *Anopheles gambiae*, 11 *A. funestus*, 874 *A. ziemanni* and 4460 Culicinae. There were insignificant decreases in numbers of *A. ziemanni* and culicines entering the shelters with LPF ($P = 0.30$ and $P = 0.0003$) respectively. However, significantly more *A. gambiae* entered the LPF fenced shelters than in unfenced shelters ($P = 0.0008$). A variation of hourly biting activities of *A. gambiae* with a peak between 0100 and 0400 at Boadi and between 1100 and 0300 at two sites at Anwomaso, was observed. *Plasmodium falciparum* infections were detected in

only 1% of *A. gambiae* but not in *A. ziemanni*. All 47 *A. gambiae* s.l. randomly selected and tested using Polymerase Chain Reaction were identified as *A. gambiae* s.s.

Conclusion: LPF protects humans against some mosquitoes but not the malaria vector, *A. gambiae*.

Key words

Mosquitoes, Anopheles gambiae, Plasmodium falciparum, malaria, shelters.

Abbreviations:

LPF: Livestock protective fence.

1.0 Introduction:

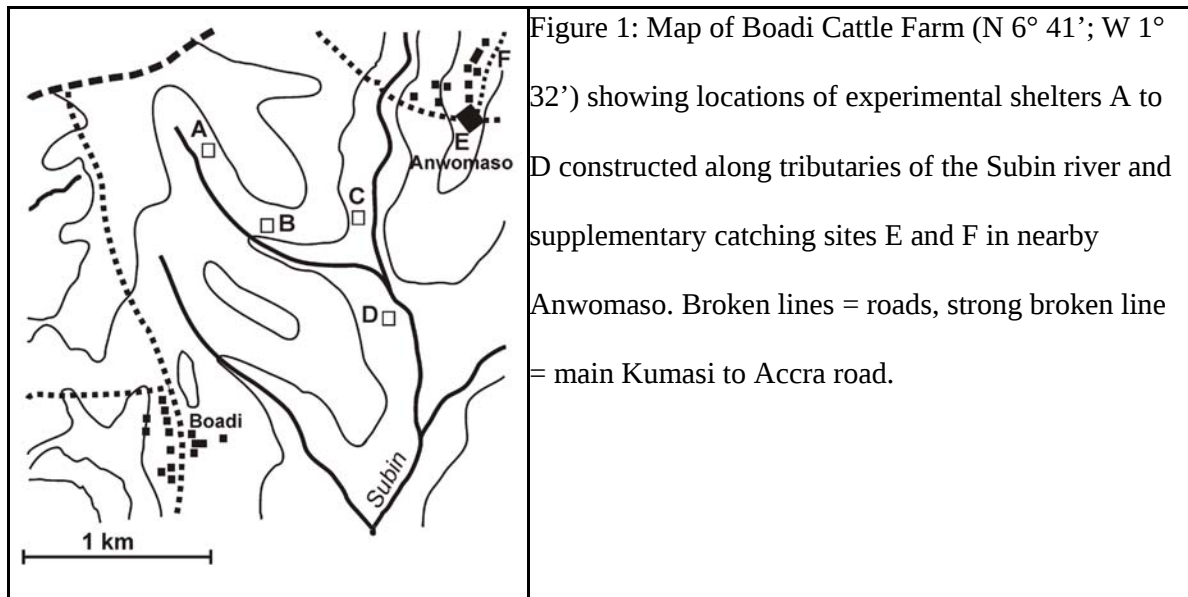
Insecticide treated livestock protective fences have been successfully employed to protect zero-grazed dairy cattle against tsetse flies transmitting animal trypanosomiasis. Farmers noticed that nuisance by mosquitoes was alleviated [1] when 1.50m high fence material treated with beta-cyfluthrin was used. In a similar study carried out in 2005 on the cattle farm of Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi, Ghana, a deltamethrin-treated fence 100 cm high fixed around experimental pens was tested for its potential to protect cattle and humans against mosquitoes, biting and nuisance flies of veterinary and medical relevance. It was shown that the insecticide-treated fence efficiently reduced the numbers of Muscinae and Stomoxyinae biting flies [2]. The effect of the deltamethrin-treated livestock protective fence (LPF) on mosquitoes attracted to humans was apparently obscured by the presence of cattle. Given that three times as many *A. gambiae* were caught by human landing catches (HLC) in pens without cattle than in pens with cattle irrespective of whether they were protected by a treated LPF or not [3], a follow-up study

51 using the same shelters without cattle but with vector collectors only was carried out in 2006.
52 Exclusion of the cattle avoided the possibility of the latter serving as zooprophylaxis;
53 attracting mosquitoes to themselves and away from the human collectors to reduce the HLC
54 [4]. The objective of the study was to investigate if the LPF would prevent anthropophagic
55 mosquitoes from entering the shelters, thereby possibly reducing malaria transmission.

56

57 **2.0 Methodology:**

58 The study was conducted on the Cattle Farm of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science
59 and Technology (KNUST) at Boadi, a peri-urban area south-east of Kumasi. The four
60 experimental segregated shelters A to D (Fig. 1), separated from each other by a distance of
61 500m, constructed for the study in 2005 [3] were again used in 2006. The shelters measuring
62 6m x 7m had a concrete floor, were half-roofed with corrugated iron sheets and were fenced
63 by 100cm high chicken wire (Fig. 2). In order to assess the effect of the deltamethrin-treated
64 LPF on numbers of mosquitoes entering the shelters, one of the four was protected by the
65 LPF (black, 150 denier polyester fibre with a 2x2mm mesh impregnated with 100mg
66 deltamethrin/m²). The treated LPF was fixed on the chicken wire surrounding the shelter
67 using hand gloves. Human landing catches of mosquitoes were conducted twice a week for
68 four weeks during the minor rainy season from 9th October to 3rd November 2006. This was
69 the same time period as the previous study [2]. Two groups of two mosquito collectors
70 worked at each of the four shelters during the same night; one group collected from 1800h to
71 midnight, the second group from midnight to 0600h.



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73

74 Figure 2: Fitting the black deltamethrin treated net to the one-meter high chicken wire fence
 75 around the semi-roofed shelter. In the background, the gallery forest of a tributary of the
 76 Subin River is seen.

77

78 One of the collectors always collected inside the shelter and the second one outside at a
 79 distance of about 20m. To compensate for possible differences of mosquito densities at the

80 four locations, the LPF was moved after each catching night from one shelter to the next one.
81 Also, the collectors rotated from shelter to shelter, from the inside to the outside positions as
82 well as before and after midnight on each sampling day to compensate for differences in their
83 attractiveness to mosquitoes. Care was taken to ensure that the same collectors did not follow
84 the treated fence as it was moved from shelter to shelter. Altogether, six full-night catches
85 were carried out inside and outside each shelter without LPF (a total of 24 catches) and two
86 full-night catches at shelters with LPF (8 catches). For comparison, six supplementary
87 catches were conducted in locations E and F (0.7 and 1.3 km northeast of shelter C) in the
88 nearby village of Anwomaso (Fig. 1).

89 The hourly collections were brought to the laboratory the next morning. Mosquitoes were
90 counted and separated into Anophelinae and Culicinae. The former were further identified
91 using the keys of Gillies and Coetzee [5], the culicines were counted and discarded.

92 *Anopheles* females were dissected under a stereomicroscope, mid-guts and ovaries were
93 removed and the latter examined under a compound microscope to determine parity by
94 inspection of the ovarian tracheoles [6]. The head and thorax of all females were examined
95 for the presence of circumsporozoite (CS) of *Plasmodium falciparum* antigen using the
96 enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) developed by Wirtz et al. [7]. A polymerase
97 chain reaction (PCR) was conducted to identify members of the *A. gambiae* complex [8].

98 Stata 12.0 for Windows, 2011 (StataCorp, 4905 Lakeway Drive College Station, Texas 77845
99 USA) was used for the statistical analysis of the results at 95% confidence intervals.

100 Differences between percentages and likelihood χ^2 values were analysed. The χ^2 test of
101 homogeneity was employed to compare hourly biting patterns.

102

103 **3.0 Results:**

104 **3.1 Mosquito density in the various pens and effects of the LPF:**

Altogether 6118 mosquitoes were collected at the Boadi cattle farm, 773 *Anopheles gambiae* s.l. (67% parous), 11 *A. funestus*, 874 *A. ziemanni* and 4460 Culicinae. Total numbers of *A. gambiae*, *A. ziemanni*, Culicinae caught inside and outside shelters with LPF and mean numbers per catch obtained inside and outside shelters without LPF are shown in Table 1. While there was some, although not significant, decrease in numbers of *A. ziemanni* entering the shelters with LPF ($P = 0.3015$) ($SD = 1.380$; $SE = 0.131$), there was a significant decrease in numbers of culicines entering the shelters with LPF ($P = 0.0003$) ($SD = 2.873$; $SE = 0.218$). On the other hand, significantly more *A. gambiae* were caught in the LPF fenced shelters than in unfenced shelters ($P = 0.0008$) ($SD = 2.185$; $SE = 0.174$). The LPF had no effect on the numbers of *A. ziemanni* ($P = 0.20$) ($SD = 2.557$; $SE = 0.209$) and culicines ($P = 0.53$) ($SD = 5.126$; $SE = 0.382$) collected outside the shelters. However, significantly more *A. gambiae* were again caught outside the LPF fenced shelters than outside unfenced shelters ($P = 0.03$) ($SD = 1.303$; $SE = 0.111$).

3.2 *Plasmodium* infections and *A. gambiae* species identification:

On the Boadi Cattle Farm, eight of the 773 *A. gambiae* caught (1.0%) were found to be positive for *P. falciparum* sporozoites by the ELISA technique. Using the means of all catches inside and outside the shelters, daily and monthly biting rates of 12.1 bites per person per night (b/p/n) and 375 b/p/m respectively, as well as an entomological infective biting rate (EIR) of 3.9 ib/p/n, were estimated for the one-month study period in October/November 2006. None of the 11 *A. funestus* and 874 *A. ziemanni* was sporozoite positive. All 47 *A. gambiae* s. l. processed in polymerase chain reaction (PCR) were identified as *A. gambiae* s.s. At Anwomaso, 5.6% of 71 *A. gambiae* were sporozoite positive.

129 Table 1. Total numbers and means of *Anopheles gambiae* (Ag), *A. ziemanni* (Az) and
 130 Culicinae (Cc) caught per night in- and outside shelters with LPF (8 catches) and without
 131 LPF (24 catches), change (%) of mean numbers caught when shelters were surrounded by an
 132 LPF and P values. *A. funestus* (11 specimens) caught during the study is not included.

<u>Location</u>	Inside			outside		
<u>Species</u>	Ag	Az	Cc	Ag	Az	Cc
LPF on the pen (total)	175.0	18.0	280.0	77.0	165.0	692.0
mean	21.9	2.3	35.0	3.2	9.6	86.5
LPF not on the pen (total)	104.0	36.0	450.0	70.0	195.0	713.0
mean	13	4.5	56.3	8.8	24.4	89.1
Totals	279.0	54.0	730.0	147.0	360.0	1405.0
Change (%)	+68.0	-50.0	-38.0	10.0	-15.0	-2.9
Standard Error	0.174	0.131	0.218	0.111	0.209	0.382
Standard Deviation	2.185	1.380	2.873	1.303	2.557	5.126
P-value	0.0008	0.3015	0.0003	0.0325	0.1997	0.5312

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134

135 3.3 Parous rates and hourly biting pattern:

136 The parous rate of *A. gambiae* was 67% (773) at Boadi Cattle Farm and 89% (71) at

137 Anwomaso. The parous rate of *A. ziemanni* at Boadi was 66% (874).

138 In Anwomaso, the biting activities of *A. gambiae* at site F peaked between 23 and 02 hours.

139 However, at site E, the biting pattern prescribed a minor peak between 23 and 24 hours and a

140 major peak between 02 and 03 hours (Fig. 3). This pattern is similar to that on the Boadi

141 Cattle Farm which peaked in the early morning between 01 and 04 hours. Biting activity of *A.*

142 *ziemanni* on the cattle farm was highest between 24 and 02 hours (Fig.4).

143 The biting patterns of the different species of mosquitoes were significantly different from
 144 each other ($p = 0.00$). The LPF also impacted the biting activities of the different mosquito
 145 species differently ($P = 0.0019$).

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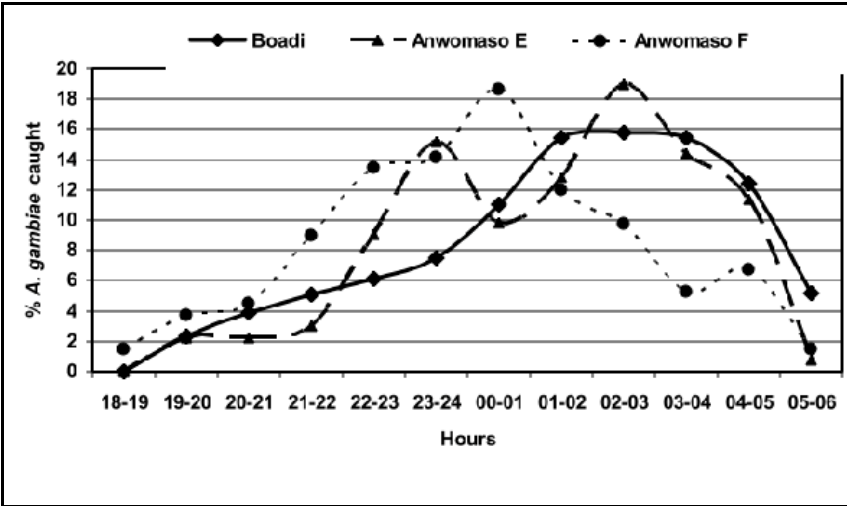


Figure 3: Hourly biting activities of *A. gambiae* at Boadi Cattle Farm and sites E, F at Anwomaso

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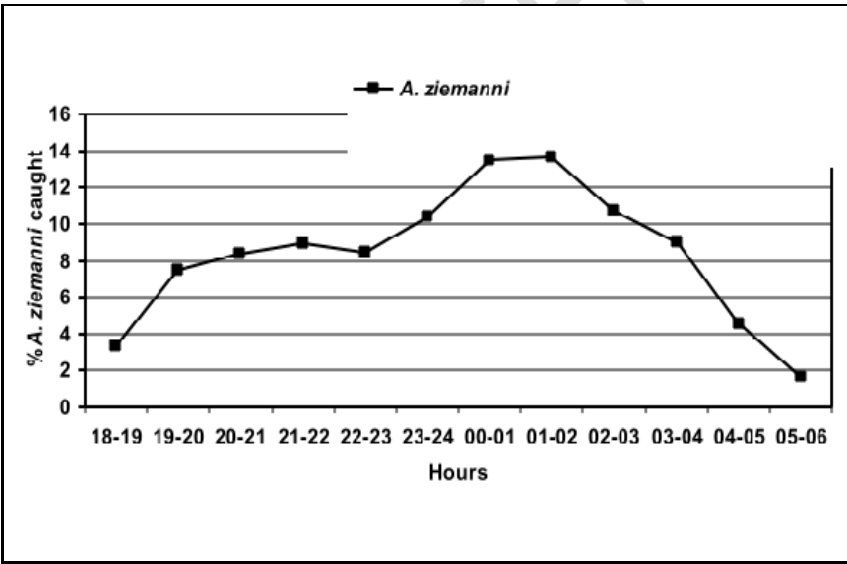


Figure 4: Hourly biting activities of *Anopheles ziemanni* at Boadi Cattle Farm.

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150 **4.0 Discussion:**

The study showed that a 1m high LPF surrounding an experimental shelter does not prevent *A. gambiae* s.s. mosquitoes from entering. It is difficult to explain why significantly higher numbers of *A. gambiae* were collected in shelters with LPF. Possibly it is not the insecticide but the net alone which changed the environmental conditions for the host-seeking mosquitoes. The partially roofed pens enclosed by the dark netting may mimic conditions attractive for endophilic species. Obviously, in contrast to the *Stomoxys* and *Musca*, which fly close to the ground and are killed by the netting [2], the *A. gambiae* were not intercepted. This is further corroborated by the fact that in a much similar experiment using 100 cm high, 150 denier polyester fences with 100 mg/m² deltamethrin, tsetse population was reduced by over 90% [9]. A recent study [10], also reported a decrease in numbers of flies including tsetse, biting and other nuisance flies in test pens protected by LPF compared to unprotected ones. In this context it is of interest that *A. gambiae* was classified in an intermediate group between low and high flying mosquitoes by Gillies and Wilkes [11]. Snow [12] observed that *A. gambiae* is only slightly affected by increasing wall height and enters houses at eaves level. They therefore may not get in contact with the LPF when entering the pens. The effectiveness of impregnated LPF around cattle enclosures on *Anopheles* populations and malaria transmission [1, 3, 13] may be explained by contact of the vector with the LPF after feeding on cattle when searching for a resting site. The biting pattern of *A. gambiae* can differ with peaks from midnight until early morning. In northern Ghana it peaked early at 22h to 24h and continued until daybreak [15]. This correlates with the finding by Abonuusum et al. [14] at Afamaso and Kona. However, though Boadi (Figure 3) is about 40 km from Afamaso and Kona, the biting pattern of *A. gambiae* differed markedly from these reports. The biting patterns at the two sites of Anwomaso reflect the variability even in close proximity (Figure 3).

The low malaria transmission in the Boadi area despite the high anopheline density may be due to low vector-human host contact. While *Anopheles* mosquitoes bite mainly during the night [16, 15, 14], workers are on the farm during the day. At night only one or two security personnel remain. Again, given that the farm is a university cattle research centre, there is high malaria awareness and the people can afford both preventive and treatment measures to reduce transmission.

The abundance of *A. ziemanni*, which is highly zoophilic [17], can be attributed to the presence of cattle. Considering the low infection rate of the most efficient malaria vector, *A. gambiae*, in the area [17], the absence of infected *A. ziemanni* was not surprising as the latter is considered to be a secondary, inefficient malaria vector. This result conforms with observations by Ribeiro et al. [18] and Ribeiro and Ramos [19], who did not detect sporozoite infections in 846 *A. ziemanni* in Angola. However, it is interesting to note that recent studies have implicated *A. ziemanni* as an important malaria vector. An instance is the report in Goulmon, Chad, [20], where *A. ziemanni* was found to be one of the most efficient malaria vectors with a human biting rate of 1.3 b/p/n and circumsporozoite protein rate of 0.5%. Another more recent example is the findings by Tabue et al. [21] in the north western region of Cameroon that with a daily human biting rate ranging from 6.75 to 8.29 b/p/n and an infective inoculation rate from 0.028 to 0.063 ib/p/n, *A. ziemanni* is a better malaria vector than *A. gambiae*.

5.0 Conclusion:

The LPF was found to be effective in protecting humans against *A. ziemanni* and the Culicinae but not the malaria vector, *A. gambiae*. The biting pattern of the latter was also found to vary at sites not far from each other, suggesting changing malaria transmission trends at closed distances.

200

201 **Acknowledgments**

202 We are grateful to Steven A. Osei, Faculty of Agriculture, for the permission to use the Boadi
203 Cattle Farm of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology for our study.
204 We are indebted to vector collectors and employees of the Cattle Farm for the continuous
205 cooperation. The provision of LPF material by the Vestergaard-Frandsen Group (Lausanne,
206 Switzerland) is greatly acknowledged. Support of Kumasi Centre for Collaborative Research
207 in Tropical Medicine, Kumasi is appreciated. Visits of Rolf Garms in Ghana were made
208 possible by support of the German Senior Experten Service in 2005 and 2006. Ayimbire
209 Abonuusum thanks the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi,
210 Ghana for a PhD grant. We thank Dr. Bari Howell for proof-reading the final version of the
211 manuscript.

212

213 **Competing Interests:**

214 There are no competing interest with any of the authors.

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216

217 **Consent**

218 Mosquito collectors were enrolled on verbal informed consent as approved by the KCCR-
219 IRB. This was chosen because most volunteers did not speak English and could not read and
220 write. Following the IRB approved protocol, a meeting was held with all participants in their
221 local language explaining the project outline and participatory risk. The meeting was
222 documented with the signature of all participants and of two witnesses. Diagnosis and
223 treatment were offered during the entire period of the project and one month after conclusion,

though none of the volunteers became sick during or at least four weeks after the catching period.

Ethical approval

Ethical approval was obtained from Kumasi Centre for Collaborative Research Institutional Review Board (KCCR–IRB), certificate number: KCCR/IRB/063/11.

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