

Sluggish Bugs: Malaria Parasites Are Affected By Jet Lag

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Mosquito piercing the skin of a human. Getty Images.

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Seems like jet lag isn't always a bad thing. Unless you're a parasite, that is.

Researchers at Edinburgh University and Oxford have discovered that if the parasite that causes malaria is "jet lagged," it will be about half as effective at causing infection. Scientists created jet lag in the parasites by injecting them into mice whose body clocks differed from the body clocks of the parasite.

(More on TIME.com: [See the malaria-proof mosquito](#))

Once injected in mice with different cycles, the rate which the parasites spread infection and caused disease was about half the normal rate.

Apparently most living organisms have an internal body clock, which is "determined by patterns of daylight and darkness and govern a range of functions such as sleep cycles, blood pressure, and physical strength."

(More on TIME.com: [Did Malaria kill King Tut?](#))

Malaria, which is spread by mosquitos, affects hundreds of millions of people a year and lead researcher on the project, Dr. Sarah Reece of Edinburgh University, said that "the more we know about how malaria parasites work, the better equipped we will be to tackle them effectively." (via [BBC](#))