

Mefloquine and the problem faced by the army

[Government](#), [Army](#)



Mefloquine was used as first line treatment drug for malaria. Initially its adverse effects were associated with gastrointestinal malfunctions but later on it becomes clear that it has neuropsychiatric effects. the drug is becoming “ agent orange” linked to neurological and psychiatric problems including suicide.

In the year 1993, Canadian soldier shot two civilians in Somalia among them one got killed and other got seriously injured and after twelve days a sixteen years old boy was tortured and killed by the soldiers. In the year 2002, three soldiers committed suicide and they all were on mefloquine for the antimalarial therapy. It was even analyses that suicides rate were 3 to 5 times higher in individual those who were on mefloquine. In March 2012, army sergeant killed 16 people in two villages and his victims were mostly women and children those who were sleeping at that time. He shot or stabbed then to death before dragging some of their bodies into a pile and lightening them into fire. Four officers who returned from Afghanistan troop, two of them committed suicide and two killed their wives. Still birth and congenital abnormalities were found in the neonates of the women who were on lariam during pregnancy. Some soldiers were accused of malingering or of having personality disorders. Liver failure and seizures are common among people using this drug.

As Mefloquine is effective against all the malaria causing species either it could be the newly developed specie or a choloquinine resistant specie it is prescribed to the army soldiers but it should be banned. The adverse effects of mefloquinie are almost on all major organs of the body. It accumulates in both liver and lungs and effects the enterohepatic circulation not only this it

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can lead to cardiac toxicity, atrioventricular blocks and renal impairment and it can also lead to permanent damage to brain. “ The published literature describes a mefloquine syndrome that presents in a variety of ways including headache, gastrointestinal disturbances, nervousness, fatigue, disorders of sleep, mood, memory and concentration, and occasionally frank psychosis. Young western women are particularly vulnerable to mefloquine’s adverse effects. Certain groups however (children, older adult travelers and Asian patients) tolerate mefloquine well.” Most of the times people also suffer from dizziness, headache, insomnia, irritability, memory loss and other personality changes. it can directly cause the brain damage and other neurological disturbances. Even after quitting the drugs the psychological disturbances have long term effects and can indulge up to 10-15 years of age. Soldiers are for the protection and safeguard of the civilians if this drug is playing with their mind and letting them to harm themselves and civilians then there is no use to continue this drug.

Government should take the action and ban the drug and should provide with other alternatives for malaria such as doxycycline even doxycycline has side effects but they are short term and minor including diarrhea, nausea and headache which is far better than the side effects caused by mefloquine.