

HEALTH SEEKING BEHAVIOUR FOR FEBRILE ILLNESS AMONGST CAREGIVERS OF CHILDREN UNDER FIVE ACROSS THE MALARIA ENDEMICITY ZONES IN KENYA

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- Health-seeking behaviour is a fundamental **determinant of health** that should be prioritized for **children**, a vulnerable demographic whose survival lies in the hands of their caregivers.
- Factors associated with appropriate HSB are the **sex of the household head** and the **highest education level attained** by the caregiver.
- In areas that are **high-risk for malaria**, the appropriate health-seeking behaviour is **high** compared to low-risk areas.

BACKGROUND

- Fever is one of the most reported symptoms and most common reasons for seeking healthcare for children under five years¹.
- Febrile illness-related health-seeking behaviour (HSB) is fundamental for decreasing negative outcomes, especially in low-resource settings like Kenya.
- Delayed presentation to hospitals in the event of febrile illness results in difficulties with diagnosis and subsequently with appropriate and timely treatment².
- Typical of countries with endemic malaria, like Kenya, fever is often taken to represent malaria despite the possibility that the cause could be different³.
- Given how quickly fever can escalate in severity resulting in death, it is pertinent and urgent to seek appropriate healthcare immediately in newborns, and when fever is persistent for more than 24 hours in children under five⁴.

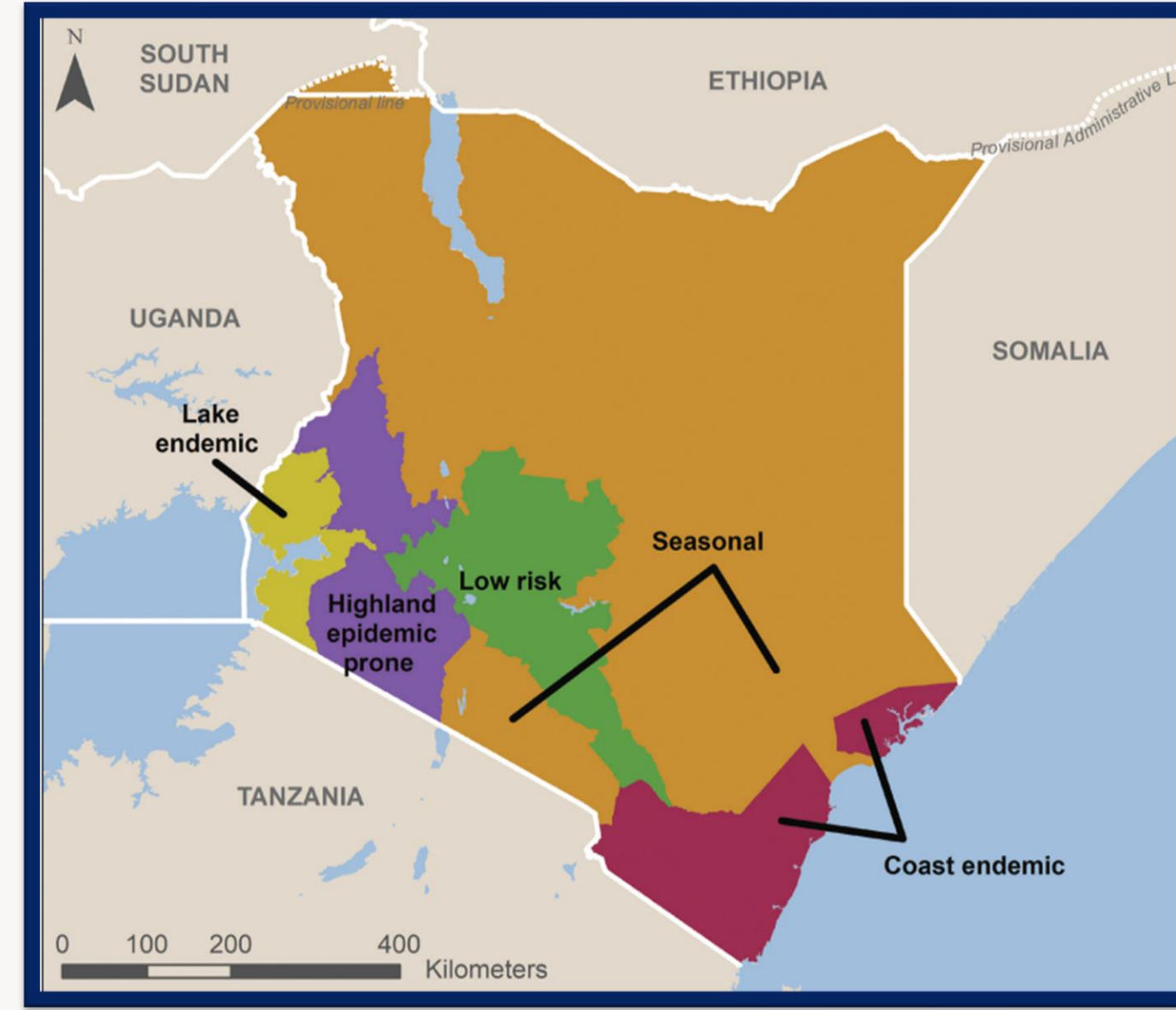


Fig. 1. Kenya by malaria endemicity zones.

OBJECTIVES

1. To describe the characteristics of children and caregivers of children under five years in Kenya.
2. To estimate the prevalence of appropriate HSB for febrile illness among the caregivers in Kenya.
3. To determine the factors associated with appropriate HSB across malaria endemicity zones in Kenya.

METHODS

Study population and sample

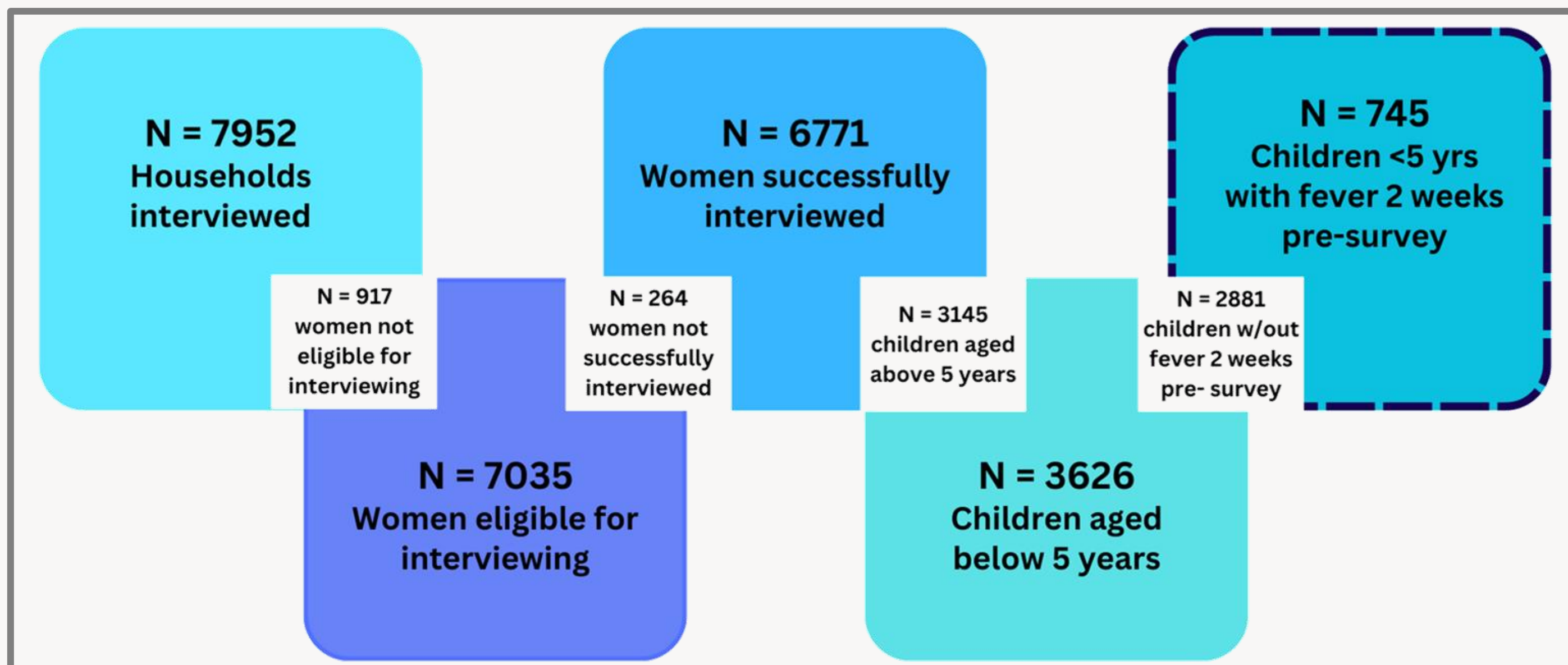


Fig. 2. Study population and sample inclusion

Outcome Variable

TYPE		TIME	
APPROPRIATE (1)	INAPPROPRIATE (0)	APPROPRIATE (1)	INAPPROPRIATE (0)
Government hospital; public health centre; government dispensary; public mobile clinic; public community health worker / field worker; private hospital; private pharmacy; private doctor; private clinic; private mobile clinic; private community health worker; other private medical provider	Shop; traditional practitioner; market; itinerant drug seller; other; no treatment.	Two days and less	More than 2 days
↓			
HEALTH SEEKING BEHAVIOUR			
TYPE	TIME	OUTCOME	
1	1	Appropriate	
1	0	Inappropriate	
0	1	Inappropriate	
0	0	Inappropriate	

Fig. 3. Operationalization of outcome variable

Statistical Analysis:

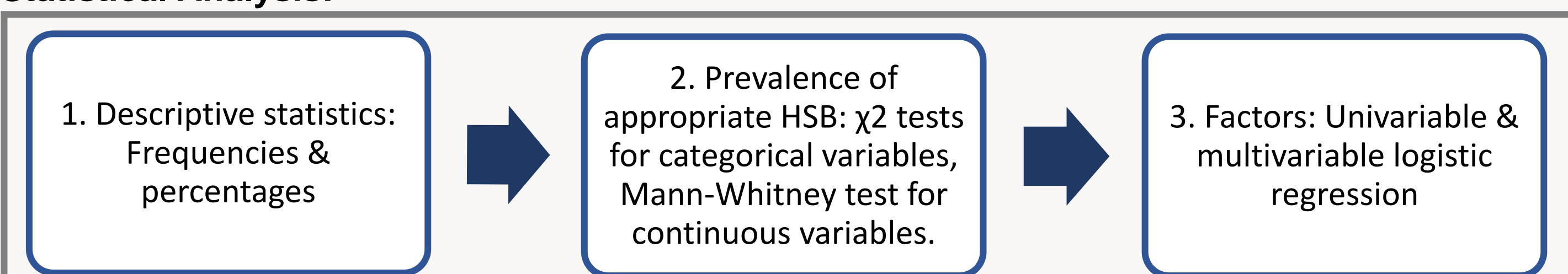


Fig. 4. Statistical analysis methodology

RESULTS

Descriptives:

- From a sample of 745, a survey-weighted total of 562 caregiver and child pairs were included.
- Of the 562 pairs, 199 (35.4%) had appropriate HSB, and 363 (64.6%) exhibited inappropriate HSB.

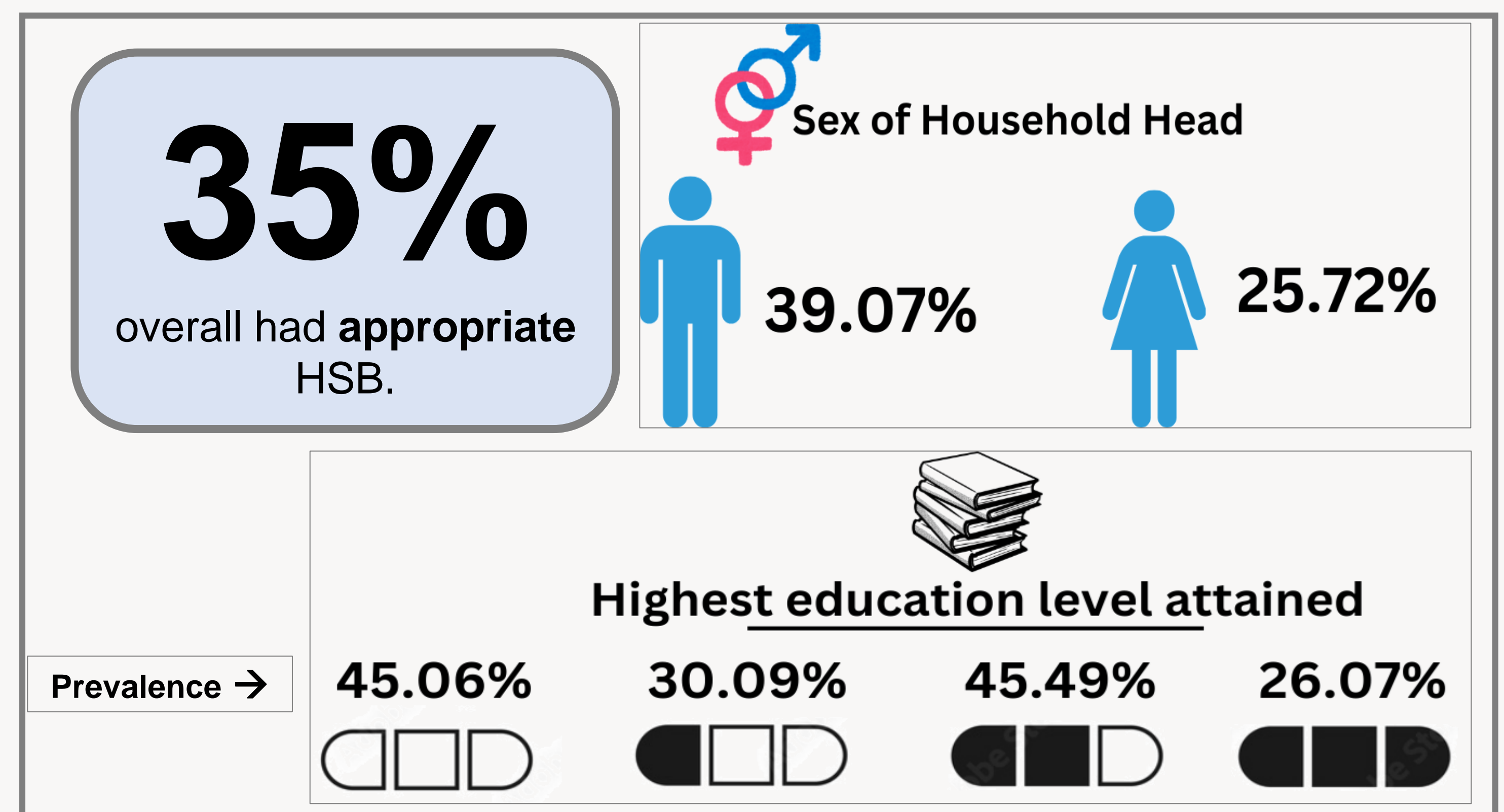


Fig. 5. Prevalence of appropriate health seeking behaviour (only statistically significant variables shown)

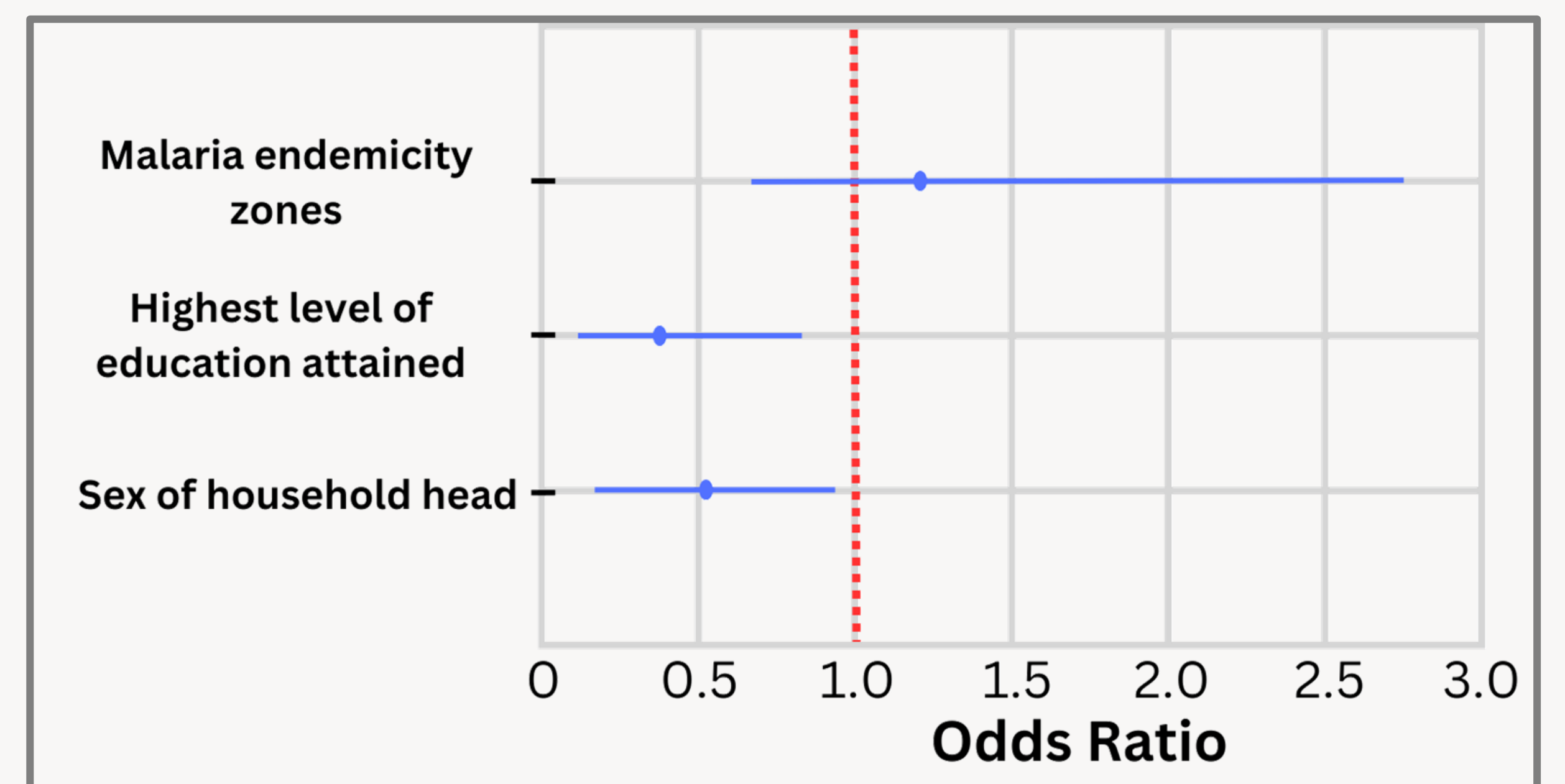


Fig. 6. Survey adjusted regression analysis of factors associated with health-seeking behaviour for febrile illness amongst caregivers of children under five years

CONCLUSIONS

High malaria risk areas have more appropriate health seeking behaviour. Tailored efforts should be intensified across malaria endemicity zones to increase appropriateness in other zones, and ultimately improve child outcomes.

Advocacy efforts should be directed towards giving females more freedom to take proactive decisions on a child's health.

Health literacy interventions should be targeted towards increasing the understanding of the importance of appropriately seeking health, despite education levels.

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