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Treatment seeking for malaria at General Hospital Anuradhapura.

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This descriptive study of malaria patients seeking treatment at general hospital Anuradhapura was conducted to analyse the frequency of occurrence of some symptoms in malaria patients and to estimate the approximate duration of parasitaemia in malaria patients resident within the Anuradhapura district, who sought treatment from general hospital Anuradhapura. The majority of patients who sought treatment were males and the majority of infections were caused by *Plasmodium vivax*. Among the "initial symptoms" identified by patients fever was the commonest. Headache was also identified by a large number of patients to be the "initial symptom". The duration of the disease as from the day of onset of the "initial symptom" to the day of seeking treatment ranged from 1-14 days, and it was found that up to 89.67 per cent of patients had sought treatment within one week of the onset of the "initial symptom". Considering the period of continuous residence in the district, when studying presenting symptoms and immune levels of the population to malaria appears more important, than considering the age of the patients. Also worthy of consideration, is the fact that over 10 per cent of the patients had not received treatment, even one week after the onset of the "initial symptom" which was identified by them to be the beginning of the present episode of malaria.