

PLASMODIUM

The malarial parasite Plasmodium is an intracellular blood parasite which causes malaria in man. There are four species of Plasmodium (*P. vivax*, *P. ovale*, *P. falciparum* and *P. malariae*) which cause different types of malaria in man.

Systematic Position

Phylum: Protozoa

Class: Sporozoa

Order: Haemosporidia

Type: Plasmodium

History: Charles Laveran (1880) discovered Plasmodium in the blood of infected man. In 1896 Ronald Ross showed that Plasmodium is transmitted by female Anopheles mosquito. He worked out the life cycle of Plasmodium causing malaria in birds. Grassi (1890) and others investigated the life cycle of Plasmodium causing malaria in man.

Plasmodium spends its life in two hosts:

1. Primary host is the man in which its sexual cycle takes place.
2. Secondary or intermediate host is the female Anopheles mosquito in which its sexual cycle occurs. The mosquito also acts as vector or carrier of disease by which Plasmodium is transmitted from one man to other.