



A Review on : Malarial Pathogenesis

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ABSTRACT

Malaria is a disease caused by repeated cycles of growth of the parasite Plasmodium in the erythrocyte. Various cellular and molecular strategies allow the parasite to evade the human immune response for many cycles of parasite multiplication. Under certain circumstances Plasmodium infection causes severe anemia or cerebral malaria; the expression of disease is influenced by both parasite and host factors, as exemplified by the exacerbation of disease during pregnancy. This article provides an overview of malaria pathogenesis, synthesizing the recent field, laboratory, and epidemiological data that will lead to the development of strategies to reduce mortality and morbidity.

Introduction:

The term Malaria was derived from the Italian word "malaria" meaning foul air. It is a protozoal blood infection caused by a mosquito-borne epi complex parasite which is transmitted to humans during the bite of an infected female Anopheles mosquito species. The United States National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) defines malaria as a disease caused by a parasite that lives part of its life in humans and part in mosquitoes.

This review aims to present all aspects of malaria in a coherent and comprehensive manner. An attempt was made to give introductory concepts regarding history, causative agents, prevalence, and incidence of malaria. It also provides old and new notions about the cell biology, pathophysiology, diagnosis, and management of malaria in one umbrella including some tips from Ethiopia. In advance, we seek to summarize recent developments in drug, vaccine, and control measures of malaria.

Malaria is an ancient disease that could be traced back to the very earliest human history. It was accepted as a disease by Hippocrates in the fourth century BC. In the early seventeenth century, the Peruvian bark of Cinchona tree was known to treat fever. In 1847, Heinrich Meckel identified black-brown pigment granules in the blood and spleen of an insane person.

Othmer Zeidler synthesized Dichloro-Diphenyl-Trichloroethane (DDT) in 1874 for his thesis. Alphonse Laveran noticed parasites which he called *Oscillaria malariae* in the blood of a malaria patient in 1880. The genus Plasmodium was portrayed by Ettore Marchiafava and Angelo Celli in 1885. The whole transmission cycle of the parasite was elucidated in 1897 by Ronald Ross. In 1898, Camillo Golgi and others demonstrated that human malaria was transmitted by *Anopheles* mosquitoes.

Chloroquine was discovered in 1934 by Hans Andersag. He called his compound resochin. In early 1950s, malaria was thought to be eliminated from the USA. Then after, human infection with *Plasmodium knowlesi* was recognized in 1965. Artemisinin was isolated from the plant *Artemisia annua* in 1971. Next, a polymerase chain reaction (PCR)-based malaria detection was depicted in the early 1990s, and meanwhile malaria rapid diagnostic tests (RDTs) were developed.

The genus *Plasmodium* (the causative agent for malaria) is thought to have originated from Dinoflagellates (photo-synthetic protozoa). From more than 200 different species of Plasmodium, at least 13 species are pathogenic to humans. Five of them *falciparum*, *vivax*, *ovale* (2 species), and *malariae*, are well-known etiology of human malaria. Moreover, disease with *knowlesi* occurs in people when an Anopheles mosquito infected by a monkey bites humans. Of these species, *falciparum* (dominant in East and Southern Africa) is mainly prevalent on the African continent and is responsible for most deaths from malaria. *Plasmodium vivax* has a wider geographic distribution. Although it can occur throughout Africa, the risk of infection with *vivax* is quite low there because of the absence of Duffy gene in many African populations. There is however, a growing evidence that *Vivax* is being transmitted among Duffy blood group-

negative inhabitants in Africa.

Pathophysiology of Malaria:

Malaria is transmitted majorly through bites of the genus *Anopheles* mosquitoes which includes more than 537 recognized species. *A. gambiae*, *A. funestus* and *A. pharoensis* were confirmed as the principal vectors in Ethiopia. Due to residence of the parasite in RBCs, malaria can also be transmitted through blood transfusion, organ transplant, or shared use of needles or syringes contaminated with blood. A new-born baby may acquire congenital malaria before or during delivery. Furthermore, malaria transmission is largely affected by global weather patterns including *El Nino* and *La Nina*. Around 44% of the world's population is at risk from malaria. According to the latest estimates 219,000,000 malaria cases most (92%) from World Health Organization (WHO) African Region occurred globally in 2017 and the disease led to 435,000 deaths most (93%) of which were also in WHO African Region. Almost all (99.7%) cases due to malaria are resulted from *falciparum*. In 2017, the number of global malaria mortality in children less than five years is estimated to be 266,000. Pregnant women have increased susceptibility to *falciparum* malaria. In malaria endemic areas *falciparum* contributes to 8–14% of low birth weight which in turn decreases the chance of a baby's survival.

Global malaria case incidence was reduced by 59% in 2017. A reduction in mortality rates (44.1%) was also reported in this year. Not only health related impact but also there is a severe economic burden in terms of lost days of work due to the disease. Of course, malaria is considered to take off 1.3% from the economic growth and 40% of public health expenditure of some African countries. It affected developing countries in many aspects including determent of tourism. A complex story that has many players, settings, & potential outcomes. As with any truly successful parasites the observed outcome of evolution in malaria is the undisturbed transition from mosquito to human to mosquito with little impact on the vector and host. Although impact of the malaria can be seen at individual, community, country and global level from the parasite's perspective, healthy host serving as two blood meals with a bit off ever in between is the norm. In fact, human clinical disease is quite rare relative to the global interaction network of mosquitoes and humans. The biology of *Plasmodium falciparum* malaria parasites as measured *in vitro* is the five species infecting human.

Plasmodium vivax, *Plasmodium ovale*, *Plasmodium malariae* and *Plasmodium knowlesi* undergoes 10 or more morphological states replicate from a single to 10,000 cells and vary in total population from one to many more *in vitro*.

In addition all of these parasites (with the exception of *P. knowlesi* in human) have been exposed four thousands of millions to the physical, immunological and more recently chemotherapeutic barriers in mosquito and humans which place tremendous selection pressure across the species. It is clear a finely tuned well rehearsed and deftly executed program. A similar selection pressure has been placed on humans and resulted in such fascinating evolutionary outcomes as sickle cell disease, hemoglobinopathies, cytokines mutations and enzyme deficiency which confer a conceptual group the ability to survive to maturity and reproduction (Banerjee et al. 2013; Perry 2014). Death from malaria at an age less than 6 years (the current most common demographic) cannot be a goal of the parasite (speaking teleologically) and thus its occurrence should be causes for concern or 0.2% leaves the unfortunate mortality as an aberrant footnote in the overall biology of the species as a whole (WHO 2015). We should not however accept even one death from a preventable and treatable disease.

Life Cycle of Malaria:

Parasite The human malaria parasite has a complex life cycle as shown in Figure. The motile infectious form *Plasmodium* sporozoites passed to individuals when the insect bites the skin probes for a blood vessel from which to feed releases various vasodilators to increase its chance of finding a vessel and salivates into the blood to prevent clotting. Within 30–60 min of inoculation the thread like sporozoites are carried to the liver by the circulatory system. Over a period of 7–12 days, the sporozoites grow into schizonts and can develop up to 30,000 merozoites which rupture the hepatocytes. On the other hand some *vivax* and *ovale* sporozoites turn into hypnozoites a form that can remain latent in the liver for months or years and cause relapses in infected people. Interestingly, recurrence of *falciparum* malaria was reported in patients some years after leaving an endemic area.

It tells that at least occasionally *falciparum* has a dormant stage. Then the asexual cycle begins with the merozoites invading RBC to grow by consuming hemoglobin. Within the host RBC the parasite undergoes development from the early ring stage to late trophozoite and then after mitotic divisions to the schizont stage which contains 6 to merozoites depending on the parasite species. When the erythrocytic schizont ruptures the released merozoites continue the life cycle by invading other RBCs. Cyclical fevers are typically happening shortly before or at the time of RBC lysis as schizonts rupture to release new infectious merozoites. This occurs every 48 h in tertian malaria and every 72 h in quartan malaria infection.

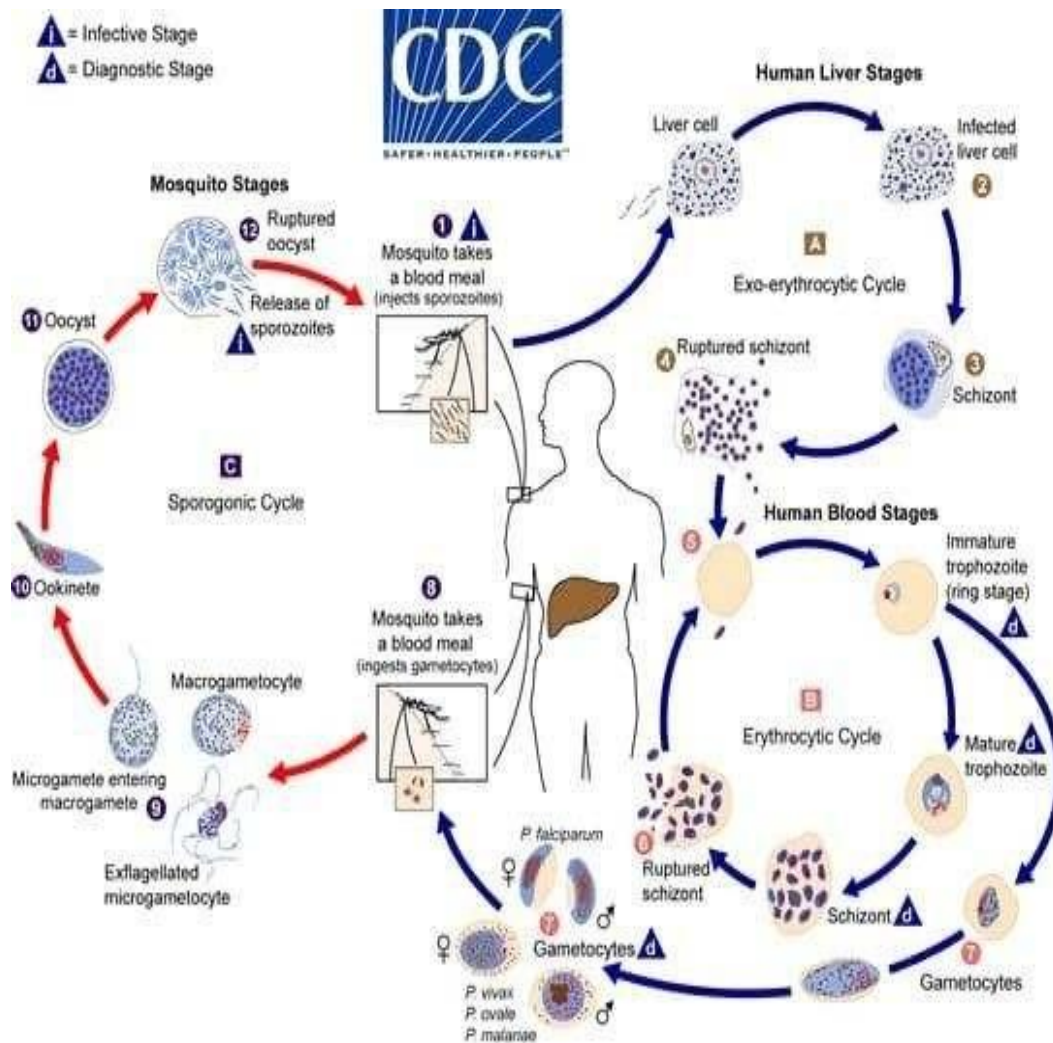


Fig.Life Cycle of Malaria

Uncomplicated Malaria:

The geographic regions where the human population is at risk for malaria infection(2.5 billion), annually 215,000,000 clinical in-fectious occur for which patients have symptoms and seek medical attention. Patient illness represents however, a subset of all individuals who have been bitten by infected mosquitoes and a much larger portion of the “at-risk” population would show a positive malaria smear or other diagnostic test if they were screened. The exact malaria parasite biology within these two groups is probably very similar with the essential differences being due to the human immune response number of prior infections and exposure profile.

The symptoms of malaria infection can only begin in any ill patient with the first liver schizont rupture and release of merozoites into the peripheral circulation this event is silent for the vast majority of patients who will become clinically ill. As the parasites continue through their asexual life cycle of merozoite reinvasion trophozoite development and schizont rupture over 24 to 48 hours the level of parasitemia parallels the level of human response (i.e. fever C- reactive protein [CRP] and tumor necrosis factor a [TNF-a] until the patient crosses a threshold of awareness and “feels ill” (Oakley et al. 2011). Uncomplicated malaria is defined as symptoms present (fever) but no clinical or laboratory signs to indicate severity or vital organ dysfunction (WHO 2015).

The human host during an initial infection, macrophage ingestion of merozoites, ruptured schizonts, or antigen-presenting trophozoites in the circulation or spleen leads to release of TNFA. The molecule, along with others in a cascade is responsible for fever during infection. Other important molecules found during active infection include interleukin 10 (IL-10) and interferon g (IFN-g) among malaria pathogenesis others. In subsequent infections some degree of antibody production produced by the prior macrophage-T-cell B-cell axis of the immune system confers additional macrophage activity leading to a more efficient clearance of parasites and production of new antibodies.

P.falciparum:

P.falciparum (Pf) modifies the surface of the infected red blood cell and creates an adhesive phenotype, which removes the parasite from circulation for nearly half of the asexual life cycle a unique time frame among the malaria parasites (Grau and Craig 2012). The binding of the infected erythrocytes can occur with endothelium platelets or uninfected red blood cells (Fairhurst and Wellem 2006; Kraemer and Smith 2006; Smith et al. 2013). The parasite accomplishes this cytoadherent ("sticky cell") state through the *P.falciparum* erythrocyte membrane protein 1 (PfEMP1), which is the product of var gene transcription (Smith et al. (2013). Within a given Pf parasite there are 60 copies of the var gene each highly variable and different from the others. These genes represent some of the most diverse within the parasite's genome and within the total parasite population. Their expression is driven by several mechanisms including immune selection pressure and epigenetics. This aspect of the parasite's biology (var gene expression) occurs in all infections including asymptomatic and uncomplicated malaria. The potential of this human parasite interaction to cause disease in humans has a definite spectrum discussed below (Smith et al. 2013). Regardless of the disease variability the sequestration (temporary removal of the parasite from circulation through red cell surface binding) of Pf occurs during every human infection for half of the asexual life cycle.

P.vivax:

P.vivax (Pv) is the most common malaria parasite causing clinical disease outside of Africa (WHO 2015). Unlike Pf but like all other human malaria parasites Pv does not show a prolonged period of sequestration during infection (Costa et al. 2011). The parasite is thus probably more frequently exposed to clearance by the spleen and more commonly seen on a peripheral blood smear during an infection. One of the unique features of Pv is the red cell preference for reticulocytes and the use of predominantly the Duffy antigen for invasion although not absolutely. This leads to a clinical infection with a lower level of parasitemia than is seen in Pf. Because reticulocytes are larger than mature red cells the infected cells appear larger than the cells around them on peripheral blood smear. Characteristic Schuffner's dots which are caveola vesicle structures are seen in both Pv and *P. ovale* (Udagama et al. 1988).

P.ovale:

P. ovale (Po) was shown to be two distinct species (*P. ovale curtisi* and *P. ovale wallikeri*), which only differ by a shorter latency period in *P. ovale wallikeri* and genetic sequence differences (Oguike et al. 2011). Thus, these two sympatric organisms are impossible to distinguish, present with the same clinical syndrome, and respond to the same therapy. Although their behavior is similar to the Duffy blood group antigen for invasion of red blood cells. On peripheral blood smear the diagnostic forms are the comet form of the trophozoite as well as the oval appearance of infected red blood cells and the presence of fimbria or finger-like projects of the red cell membrane.

P.malariae:

P. malariae (Pm) is the most benign form of malaria infection with several distinct clinical features. Patients have fever every 72 hours during an infection due to the longer parasite life cycle. The number of merozoites produced with each schizont ruptured is lower and thus parasites are lower overall in these patients compared with other types of malaria. This long life cycle and lower level of infection leads to a more robust immune response. This is often considered to cause a chronic malaria they may last decades.

Diagnosis of Malaria :

Malaria must be diagnosed early and accurately to end up with an effective management of patients. Broadly one can classify it into clinical and parasitological diagnoses. Clinical diagnosis is based on the patient's symptoms and on signs at physical examination. All of the suspected malaria should be confirmed with a parasitological diagnosis in all settings. Light microscopy and RDTs are routinely employed methods for parasitological diagnosis of malaria. Detection of the parasite on Giemsa stained peripheral blood smears by light microscopy is used as the gold standard for diagnosis of malaria. As malariae have almost similar morphology microscopy alone is insufficient to diagnose. In case of vivax, ovale and development stages subsequent to the liver cycle can be seen in the peripheral blood. However in falciparum only ring forms and banana-like gametocytes are usually present in the peripheral blood since mature parasites become sequestered.

In areas where microscopy is not readily available RDTs can be used and are based on the detection of antigens or enzymatic activities associated with the parasites. The most common antigens for RDT are *P.falciparum* histidine rich protein 2 (PfHRP2) specific for falciparum malaria and two enzymes of the parasite glycolytic pathways namely plasmodial lactate dehydrogenase (pLDH) and aldolase. LDH can be specific for falciparum or vivax malaria. But some isolates from the Amazon region Africa and India

have been found lacking the PfHRP2 probably HRP2 gene deletion which threatens the ability to diagnose and appropriately treat people infected with falciparum malaria. In 2005, single-species RDTs were introduced. Years after multispecies RDTs are being supplied by FMOH to health posts.

PCR-based methods, another parasitological diagnostic means, are the most sensitive test able to identify low levels of parasitemia, parasite species, or mixed infections, but not a suitable method for routine use. A species-specific loop-mediated isothermal amplification (LAMP) method has become widely accepted for identifying known infections. Besides, PCR is helpful as a research tool in epidemiological studies, clinical trials, and for detection of molecular markers of drug resistance to antimalarial agents.

Malaria Vaccine:

The emergence and spread of drug and insecticide resistance has been limiting the current malaria control measures thus safe and effective vaccine is required to achieve the world malaria eradication programme objectives. The justification for a malaria vaccine development is the observation that people living in endemic areas develop clinical protective immunity despite the morphological changes and antigenic variations during the parasite life cycle allows them to escape the protective immune responses of the host. So far three types of vaccine candidates have been intensively investigated: pre-erythrocytic vaccines to prevent blood stage infection, blood stage vaccines to clear parasitaemia and prevent clinical disease, and transmission blocking vaccines to prevent infection of mosquitoes and interrupt malaria transmission in populations.

Several asexual blood stage vaccines most target merozoite antigens are in clinical researches. Candidates for erythrocyte stage vaccine are None has resulted in clear clinical protection probably due to the highly polymorphic nature of the vaccine structures. But efforts to enhance the efficacy either with an oval adjuvants using viral vector prime boost strategies or by combining AMA1 and MSP1 have been increasing even though new non-polymorphic falciparum ligands CX3CL1-binding protein.

Treatment of Malaria:

Traditional Medicine:

This use varies among countries depending on a number of factors. In Singapore and the Republic of Korea where the conventional health-care system is quite well established 76% and 86% of the respective populations still commonly use TMs. About 90% of general hospitals provide TM services for both outpatients and inpatients in China. Over 100 million Europeans are TM users. In developing countries 80% of the people almost exclusively use TMs. Virtually 80% of the population living in Ethiopia is dependent on traditional medicine which essentially involves the use of plants. More than 1,200 plants that possess antimalarial activities are reported worldwide. For example *Ampelozizyphus amazonicus* and *Strychnos thourarii* were commonly used in malaria endemic areas of Brazil and Madagascar and their antiparasitic activities have been demonstrated. It is probable that some of antimalarial plants contain as yet undiscovered active constituents.

Ethiopia is rich in a wide range of tropical habitats remarkable biodiversity and use of traditional remedies for the treatment of various ailments. Studies conducted on numerous traditionally claimed Ethiopian medicinal plants confirmed their antimalarial activities including *Phytolacca dodecandra*, *Justicia schimperiana*, *Artemisia abyssinica*, *Vernonia amygdalina*, *Buddleja polystachya*, *Strychnos mitis*, *Echinops kebericho*, *Aloe trichosantha*, *Cadaba rotundifolia*, *Adhatoda schimperiana*, *Piper capense* and *Gardenia ternifolia*.

Convention medicine:

Malaria can lead to fatal outcomes in only few days thus treatment should be started as soon as possible. The main targets of current antimalarial drugs are asexual blood stages of the parasite responsible for the malarial symptoms. Nowadays the available antimalarials can be grouped into five classes according to their chemical structure and biological activity.

Chloroquine is a blood schizonticidal agent and the drug of choice for all malarial parasites except for chloroquine-resistant *Plasmodium* strains. Although almost all strains of malariae are susceptible to falciparum vivax and even some ovale strains have been reported as

resistant to chloroquine. Chloroquine resistance for falciparum is due to point mutations in the gene encoding chloroquine resistance transporter (PfCRT) protein resulting in reduced drug accumulation in the food vacuole. Drug resistance to

chloroquine has been reported in Ethiopia. Amodiaquine is effectively against some parasite strains that are resistant to chloroquine although some cross resistance exists. Piperaquine also has an excellent activity on chloroquine resistant species.

Primaquine (tissue schizonticidal agent) is effectively against the hypnozoites of vivax and ovale malaria and can kill gametocytes and consequently block the malaria transmission. Therefore its effect on oocyst and sporozoite formation (and thus onward transmission of treated infection) precedes its ectogametocyte carriage. It has weak activity against the asexual blood stage of vivax malaria. Primaquine is indeed used to achieve complete elimination of relapsing malaria due to vivax or ovale, in combination with a blood schizonticide for the erythrocytic parasites.

Proguanil is a biguanide compound that is active against all stages of Plasmodium. It has been the drug of choice for IPT in first and second trimester pregnancy and in infants living within malaria-endemic areas.

Classification of Class and Drugs:

Class	Drugs
4-Aminoquinolines	Chloroquine, amodiaquine, hydroxychloroquine
8-Aminoquinoline	Primaquine, pamaquine, pentaquine, isopentaquine
4-quinolinemethanols	Quinine, quinidine, mefloquine
Phenanthrene methanol	Halofantrine
Artemisinin derivatives	Artemisinin, artemether, artesunate, arteether
Antimetabolites	Proguanil, pyrimethamine, atovaquone, dapsone
Antibiotics	Tetracycline, doxycycline, minocycline
Diaminopyridines	Pyrimethamine

Atovaquone is active against all Plasmodium species. It is ubiquinone analogue and acquires resistance related to a single mutation of cytochrome b gene of the parasite. Artemisinin (endoperoxidesesquiterpene lactone) is a potent and fast acting blood schizonticidal killing all parasite stages. Falciparum resistance to them has now been detected in 5 countries in the Greater Mekang subregion: Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam. These resistant strains have the capacity to spread to different parts of the world including Ethiopia and to subsequently become a global threat for malaria control and treatment.

WHO recommends artemisinin-based combination therapies (ACT) for the treatment of uncomplicated malaria caused by falciparum parasite or by chloroquine resistant vivax or ovale malaria and knowlesi. Atovaquone-proguanil may be considered for the treatment of uncomplicated malaria in travelers outside malaria endemic areas. Quinine plus clindamycin is used for uncomplicated malaria treatment in the first trimester of pregnancy. In Ethiopia, artemether-lumefantrine (Coartem) is suggested as the first-line drug for uncomplicated falciparum malaria and chloroquine for other species, but oral quinine is considered as a second option.

Quinidine plus doxycycline, tetracycline, or clindamycin is the preferred drug in the USA to treat severe malaria. Injectable artesunate is the preferred drug, and intramuscular artemether is an alternative drug. If these two drugs are not available, injectable quinine can be used to manage severe malaria.

Conclusion :

Malaria, an ancient human disease, is still a major source of illness and death in endemic regions, affecting both children and adults. Falciparum and vivax malaria pose a significant threat to community health. Malaria transmission is still dynamic over the world, despite the decline in prevalence and incidence. As a result, malaria control necessitates an integrated approach that includes vector control as well as rapid treatment with potent antimalarial drugs. However, developing resistance to control methods and currently available antimalarial medications makes fighting malaria a difficult task. Despite decades of intensive research, there are currently no licensed malaria vaccines available. Despite the fact that numerous medications are in development, the majority of them are unable to kill both gametocytes and hypnozoites. Resistance to conventional antimalarials will spread across Africa, including Ethiopia, if the past is any indication. Success and resistance are reshaping the malaria landscape, necessitating the development of new instruments and techniques. As a result, the world urgently requires new, safe, and efficient insecticides and medications, as well as vaccinations, to combat the present resistance problem.

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