

MoD computers 'put soldiers' health at risk'

By Henry Bodkin

TROOPS preparing to deploy overseas are being wrongly prescribed potentially damaging anti-malarial drugs due to failures in the MoD's medical IT system, senior army doctors have warned.

Doctors are frequently unable to access soldiers' patient histories and as a result hand out inappropriate drugs such as lariam - which has been shown to cause depression, suicidal thoughts

and psychosis - or medicines meant for other patients, according to the former head of Britain's main military hospital in Afghanistan.

Colonel Glynn Evans said yesterday that the Defence Medical Information Capability Programme (DMICP) made it impossible to provide safe and timely treatment. "We're having to treat real patients in real time and the system cannot keep up with us," he said.

The British Medical Association yes-

terday called on the MoD to urgently improve the system to prevent its "frequent crashes or total loss of IT".

Colonel Evans, chairman of the body's Armed Forces Committee and an NHS anaesthetist, said the worst fault of the system was an inability to bring up soldiers' medical histories as they prepare for emergency deployments.

DMICP has been in use by the MoD for more than a decade.

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