

Niger Delta Weekly: Preventing a Lassa Fever Epidemic in Ondo and Edo State

January 23-29, 2022

Description

This special edition of the weekly update highlights emerging threats to public health and human security in the Niger Delta with a focus on the resurgence of Lassa fever in Ondo and Edo State. Lassa Fever, also known as Lassa hemorrhagic fever (LHF) is a zoonotic and acute viral disease caused by the Lassa virus. It is transmitted through food and household items contaminated by infected rodents and contact with infected persons. Symptoms include fever, weakness, headache, cough, diarrhea, chest pain and breathing problems. It is an epidemic-prone infectious disease with significant public health consequences. According to epidemiological data from the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), 170 cases of Lassa fever and 32 deaths were reported across Nigeria in January 2022. Cases were reported in 37 LGAs across 12 States, including Ondo and Edo. According to NCDC's Lassa fever Situation Reports, as of January 23, 2022, 56.5% of all confirmed cases were reported in Edo and Ondo State. Ondo also had the highest number of Lassa fever related deaths during the period, with a Case Fatality Ratio (CFR) of 21%.

Why it Matters

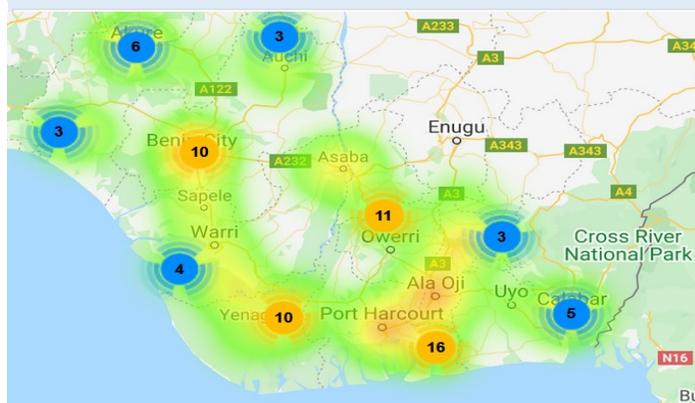
Epidemiological data shows that Lassa fever is increasingly becoming endemic and seasonal in Ondo and Edo State. According to data from NCDC, over 56% of recent cases of the disease in Nigeria were reported in Ondo and Edo State. Recurrent outbreaks of the disease could bring about serious socio-economic and political repercussions in the endemic States, especially within the context of the COVID-19 crisis.

Social: The seasonal outbreak of the disease could bring about psychosocial and health consequences that can undermine the wellbeing of residents. If infection rate continues, the disease could overwhelm health facilities and healthcare professionals in the endemic areas, especially against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic. The infectious nature of the disease could also result in containment measures that can cause anxiety and a sense of isolation among residents.

Economic: The economic repercussions of the disease could be as disrupting as its epidemiological consequences. The disease could result in travel restrictions and disruption of economic activities. Increased infection rate could cause loss of livelihoods and labor shortages. Fear and uncertainties about the disease could also adversely affect consumer behavior and cause loss of income and productivity.

Political: The outbreak of the disease could have serious political ramifications in the affected States. The seasonal outbreak of the disease could raise concerns about government commitment to public health security. This could weaken citizens' trust in the government and cause protests that could disrupt governance in the States.

Heat Map of Infectious Disease Related Incidents in the Niger Delta of Nigeria



Heat Map shows the geographical concentration of infectious disease outbreaks in the Niger Delta from January 2018 - December 2021. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org

Prognosis

Recurrent outbreak of Lassa fever in Edo and Ondo State is a serious public health concern and governance challenge. The disease could become widespread and cause socio-economic and political disruptions. While the NCDC has activated the national Lassa fever Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) in response to the recent outbreak, stakeholders should collaborate with the relevant government agencies and media outfits to sensitize the public about the disease and advise residents on preventive and remedial measures.

Contact Us

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Report Incidents: IPDU Early Warning System

Please report any verified incident of conflict to the IPDU SMS early warning system: Text report to **080 9936 2222**

Incident Details: Kindly include the State, LGA, Town, Date, and Brief Incident Description.



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