

Niger Delta Weekly: Spotighting Outbreak of Lassa Fever in Edo and Ondo State

February 07-13, 2021

Description

This special edition of the weekly update spotlights emerging threats to public health and human security in the Niger Delta with a focus on the outbreak of Lassa fever in Edo and Ondo State. Lassa fever, also known as Lassa hemorrhagic fever (LHF) is a zoonotic and acute viral disease caused by the Lassa virus. Symptoms include fever, tiredness, weakness, headache, cough, diarrhea, chest pain and breathing problems. About 80% of those infected with the virus may not show symptoms. It is an epidemic-prone infectious disease with significant public health consequences. According to epidemiological data from the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), 54 cases of Lassa Fever and 12 deaths were reported across Nigeria in January 2021. Cases were reported in 23 LGAs across eight States, including Edo and Ondo. According to NCDC's Lassa fever Situation Reports, as of January 24, 2021, about 55% and 28% of all confirmed cases were reported in Edo and Ondo State respectively. Ondo State also had the highest number of reported Lassa fever related deaths during the period, with a Case Fatality Rate (CFR) of 38%.

Why it Matters

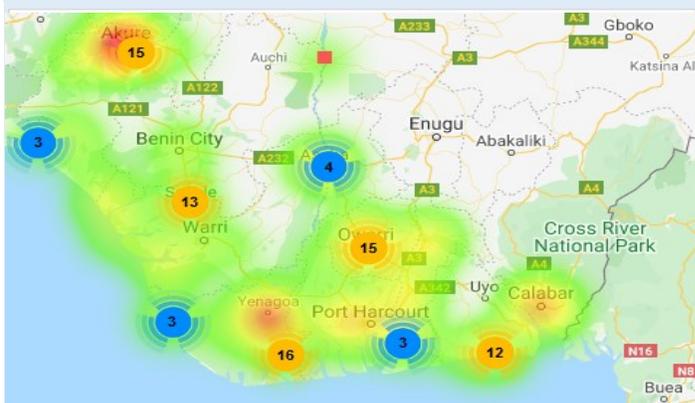
Edo and Ondo States are reportedly the epicenter of Lassa fever infections in Nigeria. According to NCDC epidemiological data, the two states accounted for 60, 67, 70 and 67% of confirmed cases in 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 respectively. Recent data indicates an increase in Lassa fever infections in Edo and Ondo since January 2021. Continued outbreaks of the disease could have serious socio-economic and political ramifications, especially in the context of the COVID-19 crisis.

Social: If the infection rate of Lassa fever continues, it could overwhelm health facilities and healthcare professionals, particularly against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic. This could worsen existing vulnerabilities and result in more infections in the endemic areas. This could also result in far-reaching containment measures that can cause residents high levels of stress and hardship.

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

Political: The disease could have significant political ramifications, especially against the backdrop of the COVID-19 crisis. The seasonal outbreak of the disease could raise concerns about government commitment to public health security. This could erode citizens' trust in the government and fuel political instability in the endemic 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 2017 - December 2020. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org.

Prognosis

The outbreak of Lassa fever is increasingly becoming endemic and seasonal in Edo and Ondo States. Stakeholders should monitor the trend and respond proactively. While the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and the state governments are making efforts to curtail the disease, peace and development actors should collaborate with the relevant government agencies and media outfits to sensitize the public about the disease and advise residents in the endemic States on appropriate remedial and preventive measures.

Contact Us

Inquiries: Afeno Super Odomovo, Research Coordinator

Telephone: 08172401595

Email: afeno@pindfoundation.org

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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