



NEWSLETTER

.... promoting health, protecting people and serving the vulnerable in society

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Nigeria, WHO partners to contain Lassa Fever Outbreak in the country



Vector control in Edo state

“Contracting Lassa fever was a very bad experience”, says 41 years old Marian Oyinbor, a resident of Ekpoma, Esan West Local Government Area (LGA), Edo state, who was treated for Lassa Fever – a haemorrhagic disease which has killed 98 people in Nigeria in 2022.

For Marian and her household, it is an experience she would not like to re-live because she and 4 of her children were infected with the virus and were hospitalized at the Irrua Specialist Teaching Hospital (ISTH), in Esan LGA.

“After the experience, I have been taking extra care of keeping my family safe by preserving our foods very well, washing my hands always and improving on personal and environmental cleanliness. I have been preventing rats from my house”, she said.

Lassa fever is a transmittable disease. An infected person can infect others who come in contact with the infected person's body fluid.

For 41 years old Akhira Ernest, residing in Irrua, Esan Central LGA, in Edo state, his infection was not a severe case, as it was detected early.

“I was quite ill, but was placed on treatment early. Lassa fever is a deadly disease, but is treatable when presented early. I have since been maintaining good infection prevention control measures, ensuring rats are not living in my house and proper preservation of food stuff, he said.

Sensitization to combating disease

Lassa fever, endemic in Nigeria, has infected 540 people in 21 states and the FCT since the beginning of the year. Cases of Lassa fever often increase during the dry season, between November and May. Each year, Nigeria records dozens of confirmed cases and deaths including those of health workers.

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<https://www.afro.who.int/countries/nigeria>

Nigeria renews commitments to improve adolescent health towards achieving UHC



The Honorable Minister of Health with adolescent advocates and partners at the event

Nigeria's Minister of Health, Dr Osagie Ehanire says to progress on Universal Health Coverage (UHC), the country recognizes the need to keep adolescents at the center of all programmes, centered around their health and development.

To ensure 'no adolescent or young person is left behind' the Ministry will continue to collaborate with all partners and stakeholders to respond to the needs of different categories of adolescents and young people who are at various levels of vulnerabilities," says the Minister of Health, Dr Osagie Ehanire at the 2022 National International Adolescent Health Week (IAHW) commemoration in Abuja.

According to the minister, "we are therefore advocating and making all efforts to strengthen effective coordination of adolescent health program nationwide"

while urging all partners to replicate the same structure in their respective states to ensure continuous delivery of essential gender-responsive services and to mitigate barriers faced by adolescents and young people in accessing services in the country.

The IAHW is a week-long participatory event commemorated globally and annually in the third week of March aimed at celebrating young people with the goal of working collectively towards improving the health and well-being of adolescents across the world. The theme for this year, 2022 is "Transitions: Building a case for the visibility of adolescents in Nigeria while transitioning from a pre-pandemic to a life shaped by pandemic."

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Nigeria bolsters laboratory capacity for antimicrobial resistance towards Universal Health Coverage

Imagine a world where medical treatment of routine ailments or operations become life-threatening and stop responding to drugs. The seemingly far-fetched scenario is becoming real and a danger to medical interventions with the emergence of antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

In the case of Yomi Ade (not real name), a 21- years old who lives in Ile-Ife, Osun State, had to spend 87 days in the hospital after being diagnosed with blood sepsis because his ailment was not responding to any of the medication administered.

Being a sickle-cell patient, Mr Ade had hip surgery some months earlier but - recovered and went back to school. He later fell ill and was rushed home and taken to the Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospital, Ile-Ife, Osun State, in South-West Nigeria, where he spent almost three months.

"I missed a semester and could not graduate with my classmates because I was in the hospital. My case was complex as it was not responding to almost all the antibiotics administered. The doctors were perplexed, and this affected me psychologically. It was so bad as there seemed to be no cure for the ailment", he said.

"Yomi is not the only peculiar case of antibiotic resistance we have recorded in this hospital. We have had patients whos were also not responding to the first and second lines of antibiotics treatment options. The emerging threats have forced health care professionals to use reserved and more expensive antibiotics to combat the diseases", Professor Oladipo Aboderin, a Consultant Clinical Microbiologist at the Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospitals, Ile-Ife, Nigeria said.



Doctors working on a sample at a laboratory in Obafemi Awolowo University

Professor Aboderin said it has become essential for countries to address AMR for universal health coverage (UHC) strategy to be truly successful.

He said, "We thought AMR was a faceless threat to medical procedures and treatments. However, with recent happenings, there is a need for intentional and extensive research to understand the magnitude of the problem within society.

AMR in patients has unmeasurable consequences on the patients and their families, to mention a few it has emotional, financial, psychological and time-consuming effects. There is always huge out of pocket spending because the higher the generic prescribed, the more expensive and difficult it is to purchase. It defeats the goal of achieving universal health coverage", he said.

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COVID-19 pandemic- health workers affirm improvements in infection prevention and control



Dr Oje Uzochi, Medical Officer at Asokoro General Hospital, Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja

"It's hard to remember life without COVID-19 anymore, we have become so used to wearing masks and preventives that not doing so makes it look weird" says Dr Oje Uzochi, a Medical Officer at Asokoro General Hospital, Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja.

The 35-year-old pediatrician also mentioned that despite the sad incidents COVID-19 left behind, it has also helped in improving infection prevention and control (IPC) in hospitals.

To Dr Uzochi, "We are much more protected now, it is good to say we do not take as much diseases home as we used to and I have had less flu in the last few years than before the pandemic. Most times children can cough on your face during consultation and you tend to get infected after a few days, it is not like that anymore".

"Patients are generally much more aware of hygiene as I could remember struggling with parents to wash hands, sterilize things and be conscious of their environment, but now they do it themselves so there are less diseases presented at the hospital presently."

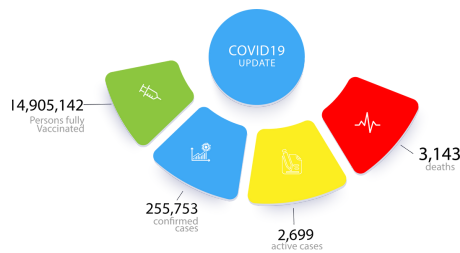
Another health practitioner, 47-year-old intensive care unit (ICU) nurse at the same hospital, Mr Apollos Haruna, who has been practicing for over 20 years, also shared his experience. To him, "COVID-19 has changed and improved the entire hospital system in terms of infection prevention and control. Before the pandemic, we weren't taking things like handwashing seriously, but now it has become the norm, we do instinctively, whether we interact with people or not."

Also, he said, "I used to face some kind of stigma especially because the hospital I worked for was a COVID-19 treatment center, people were always distancing themselves from me thinking I would transfer the virus to them, luckily for me as I was very strict with the COVID-19 guidelines I never contracted the virus".

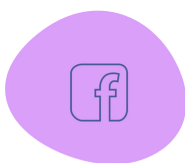
It has been two years into the COVID-19 pandemic, results of a study conducted nationwide by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), shows that over 50 per cent of Nigerians have been exposed to the virus, and have antibodies for COVID-19.

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COVID 19 UPDATE 6 MAY 2022



SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYTICS MARCH



REACH **704,528**



IMPRESSIONS **129,438**



REACH **16,171**

CALENDAR OF INTERNATIONAL HEALTH DAYS 2022

APRIL

- 2 World Autism Awareness Day
- 7 World Health Day
- 14 World Chagas Disease Day
- 20 - 25 Africa Vaccines Week
- 20 -25 World Immunization Week
- 25 World Malaria Day
- 28 World Day for safety and Health at work

Closing access gaps, rural populace solicit for more functional primary healthcare centres



Rukayat Yunsa, attending ante-natal service at the Kuchingoro PHC

Early in the morning on 24 September 2013, Rukayat Yunsa went into labour and was rushed to the Primary Healthcare Centre (PHC), located close to her home at Kuchingoro community, Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC), Abuja.

Rukayat, who is currently seven-months into her third pregnancy, said she was not perturbed about the health facility where she would give birth to her baby because the PHC in her area is functional and works 24 hours.

"The PHC is good, and they provide 24 hours service. I gave birth to my two children here, and I will give birth to this baby here too. My family use this health centre for other health services like routine immunization and treatment of disease. Health workers are always on duty anytime you get here. The service is good, but we need a machine for pregnancy scans as it would reduce the stress of looking for a place to conduct a pregnancy scan," she said.

Primary Healthcare Centres (PHCs) play vital roles in the healthcare system and were introduced worldwide after the Alma-Ata Declaration of 1978, and its reaffirmation with the Astana Declaration in 2018, global healthcare leaders established to fulfill the goal of better health for all. The PHC is a grass-root management approach to providing health care services to communities.

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Amidst COVID-19 response, WHO and partners support Nigeria towards attaining a TB free- status



A patient taking TB drug

When Ms Tina Amos, a 42-year-old mother of five residing at Byazhin, Bwari Local Government Area (LGA), Abuja learnt she had tuberculosis (TB), she thought that was the end of her life, believing she had no hope for survival.

Three months after the diagnosis, Mrs Amos was all smiles as she walked into the doctors' consultation room at the Primary Health Care centre (PHC) in her neighborhood, where she has been receiving medication, thanks to the effort of the government, WHO and other partners.

"I was coughing for over three months, my body was always hot, I kept sweating, lost weight and was using local herbs, but it was not working. My family and friends were concerned about the persistent cough, and a neighbor advised me to go to the PHC. At the PHC, the doctor referred me to Kubwa General (Hospital), where I was diagnosed with TB and sent back with my result to the PHC to start treatment. I have been coming here to collect drugs and I feel better.

The treatment has been free. People who have been coughing for more than two weeks should visit the hospital. I now know that TB is curable", she said.

Intensifying case search

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the World Health Organization (WHO) and its partners have continued to support the Government of Nigeria in combatting the TB scourge.

For Nigeria to attain the Sustainable Development Goals, active TB case finding is vital in combatting the scourge of the disease as over 300 000 cases are estimated to be missed annually.

To improve TB case findings, notwithstanding the pandemic, the WHO, with the support of USAID, convened a multi-stakeholder meeting to leverage COVID-19 response to drive a joint TB/COVID-19 bidirectional screening, vaccination.

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GALLERY



WHO Nigeria Strategy refresh Management retreat



Group photograph at the Global launch of the Lancet Nigeria Commission



Dr. Walter Kazadi Mulombo speaking at the Global launch of the Lancet Nigeria Commission



Dr Walter Kazadi Mulombo giving his goodwill message at the Primary Health Care Summit World press conference



Launch of some documents at the Primary Health Care Summit 2022

Birthdays/Social Events

We celebrate all our colleagues born in the month of March, this is to wish you a happy and blessed birthday.

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