

Knowledge of Lassa fever and infection prevention and control practices among healthcare workers in a North-central State, Nigeria

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Introduction

Healthcare-associated infections of Lassa fever have been described in many West African countries. Studies in some states have shown poor knowledge and infection prevention and control practices among healthcare workers. This study assesses the knowledge of Lassa fever and practices of infection prevention and control among healthcare workers in Benue State, Nigeria

Methods

A cross-sectional study was conducted among 273 Health care workers in government healthcare facilities in Benue state using a multistage sampling technique. The respondents were interviewed using a pre-tested interviewer-administered semi-structured questionnaire. Descriptive and inferential statistics were performed at $\alpha=0.05$

Results

Majority, 177 (64.8%) of the respondents were female. The mean age of the respondents was 33.3 years (SD=10.0). Majority, [166 (60.8%)] work in tertiary health care facilities. Less than half, 124

(45.4%) have at least 10 years working experience. Most of the respondents, 206 (75.5%) had good knowledge of Lassa fever, and good IPC practices (82.4%). Participants from tertiary health facilities were less likely of good IPC practices compared to those from primary health facilities (AOR=0.17, CI: 0.05, 0.53). Those with previous exposure to Lassa fever training were three times as likely as those with no prior training to have good IPC practices (AOR=3.03, CI: 1.04, 8.78). In terms of cadre, doctors (AOR=0.16, CI: 0.03, 0.79) and Pharmacists (AOR=0.10, CI: 0.02, 0.53) were less likely of good IPC practices compared to CHEWs.

Conclusion

Doctors were less likely to adhere to IPC practices than other HCWs across all three levels of healthcare facilities. Similarly, all HCWs in tertiary healthcare facilities were less likely to adhere to IPC practices than their counterparts in secondary and primary healthcare facilities. This negligence puts HCWs at risk of healthcare-associated transmission of Lassa fever infection. Regular training on Lassa fever IPC protocols is recommended to enhance health outcomes.