

Report of first confirmed Lassa fever case in Bayelsa State, a non-endemic State in Nigeria, 2023

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Introduction

Lassa fever, an endemic viral haemorrhagic fever (VHF) in Nigeria, is relatively unknown in Bayelsa State, in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. This is the first confirmed Lassa fever case, a mortality, which drew attention to the risk of Lassa fever outbreak emergence in non-endemic States like Bayelsa State, with potentially high mortality.

Methods

Records in the referring and referral hospitals were reviewed, and a case investigation was done in the latter. Lassa fever PCR testing was done at the National Reference Laboratory, Abuja. Counselling and testing of close contacts continued for three weeks to ensure safe burial and minimise transmission risk.

Results

This index case was a 47-year-old female civil servant residing in Yenagoa, referred with a high index of suspicion for VHF from a private hospital to the State referral hospital, where she died within hours of admission. She had a history of immunosuppression and travels to states having confirmed cases. Her Lassa fever PCR result returned positive four days later. All contacts tested negative.

Conclusion

The first confirmed Lassa fever case in Bayelsa, a non-endemic State in Nigeria, died with a history of travel to endemic states and immunosuppression.