

Contribution of epidemic treatment centers in the surveillance and response to Lassa virus hemorrhagic fever in Benin

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Introduction

Benin, located in the West African sub-region with a significant cross-border flow of populations, is exposed to the epidemic risk of Lassa hemorrhagic fever. During and after the COVID-19 pandemic, Benin set up epidemic treatment centres (ETCs) whose role was to manage cases in crisis situations. This study aimed to evaluate the contribution of ETCs to the epidemic response plan.

Methods

A situational analysis and a normative document review were carried out in 2024 and concerned the ETCs of the departments of Atlantique, Zou, Borgou and Atacora. Data was collected on activities, human and logistical resources, operational capacities, and the laboratory technical platform.

Results

ETCs are specifically configured and equipped for the hospital management of cases with a specific circuit for suspected cases, probable cases and confirmed cases. Therapeutic protocols are applied according to the management guidelines. The health personnel working there are also trained in case management in epidemic situations. In the event of death, dignified and secure burials are ensured. ETCs also participate in biological surveillance thanks to a P4 laboratory for germ

identification and genomic detection, and thus support the national laboratory for viral hemorrhagic fevers. The data collected from patients makes it possible to strengthen epidemiological surveillance and to conduct studies on risk factors. ETCs are periodically used for the training of rapid response teams in collaboration with the public health emergency operations center, the epidemiological surveillance directorate and the CNLSTP. ETCs managers are involved in community awareness sessions on the prevention and surveillance of diseases with epidemic potential.

Conclusion

The threat of a health crisis linked to diseases with epidemic potential is permanent in an environment where the risk is high. In Benin, ETCs represent an important asset for preparation and response for a rapid, coordinated and adequate reaction.