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Comparative analysis of Lassa fever case identification: Health facilities vs. community settings

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Introduction

Lassa fever is endemic in Nigeria, especially in areas where multimammate rats are common. It has been a public health concern in Nigeria since 1950. The study emphasizes the significance of integrated surveillance systems, identifying detection gaps, understanding underreporting factors, and strengthening collaboration between community health workers and healthcare facilities in Nigeria.

Methods

This study conducted a retrospective analysis of Lassa fever cases reported between Epi Week 1 and Epi Week 20, 2025, using data from the Surveillance Outbreak Response Management and Analysis System (SORMAS). Comparison of case detection and reporting effectiveness between health facilities and community settings, examining modes of reporting and detection performance was analysed.

Results

Health Facility Cases: 87% (n=426) of cases were detected, with a median reporting time of 2 days. Community Cases: 13% (n=62) of cases were identified, with a median reporting time of 4 days. Health facilities reported cases more promptly and in higher numbers compared to community settings, underscoring their importance in Lassa fever surveillance.

Conclusion

The study shows disparities in reporting timeliness and case detection rates between two critical surveillance settings. Health facilities are crucial for Lassa fever surveillance, but community-based detection is also essential. Strengthening community surveillance, integrating health workers, addressing case identification gaps, enhancing community awareness, and fostering collaboration between facilities and communities are recommended.