

## **Cultivating excellence in Lassa fever research: The essential contribution of GCP training to medical countermeasure development**

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### **Introduction**

Lassa fever (LF) an Acute Haemorrhagic Viral Infection, is a significant public health problem across West African countries, with approximately 300,000 cases reported annually and 15% case fatality rate among hospitalised patients. LF causes an enormous burden and straining under-resourced health systems, subsequently the need to address the problem is highly discussed among the scientific research community. However, the shortage of trained research personnel capable of conducting Good Clinical Practice (GCP) compliant clinical trials limits the effective implementation of evidence-based interventions against LF. Our study aims to address this critical capacity gap in conducting GCP-compliant LF research by implementing targeted GCP training.

### **Methods**

We designed and implemented a comprehensive GCP training program at Abubakar Tafawa Balewa Teaching Hospital (ATBUTH), in Bauchi State, Nigeria. The training consisted of theoretical sessions and practical application of targeted clinical researchers at ATBTH involved in LF trials. The training modules covered essential GCP principles, including ethical conduct, regulatory compliance, informed consent, and data integrity standards.

### **Results**

Forty-two clinical researchers successfully completed the GCP training. The training enhanced participants' understanding of GCP principles and improved institutional readiness to design, implement, and monitor LF clinical trials. It also strengthened data credibility, fostered community trust, and aligned LF research activities with international regulatory standards.

### **Conclusion**

Targeted GCP training significantly improved local capacity for conducting high-quality LF clinical trials. This intervention addresses a critical operational barrier to medical countermeasure development. We recommend systematic expansion of similar training programs across West African research institutions to build robust regional capacity for LF research. Such initiatives are essential for accelerating the development of vaccines and therapeutics, ultimately reducing the substantial disease burden.