

Building a skilled workforce for Lassa fever response: Regional clinical management training outcomes in the ECOWAS region

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Introduction

Lassa fever, a viral hemorrhagic illness endemic to West Africa, poses significant public health challenges due to its high morbidity and mortality rates, especially among healthcare workers (HCWs) and vulnerable populations. In response to these challenges and the recurring outbreaks in the ECOWAS region, a Regional Training of Trainers on Clinical Management of Lassa Fever was held from March 24–28, 2025, in Lomé, Togo. This training, organized by the West African Health Organization (WAHO) in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and other partners, aimed to enhance the region's capacity to manage Lassa fever cases by equipping clinicians with up-to-date knowledge and practical skills.

Methods

Thirty-five participants from 10 ECOWAS Member States were trained using a dual-pathway approach that focused on early detection and referral and Intensive clinical management. The methodology combined expert-led presentations, practical demonstrations, scenario-based discussions, and a comprehensive simulation exercise (SIMEX) to reinforce the learning experience.

Results

The training covered key topics including infection prevention and control (IPC), case triage, management of complications (e.g., shock, renal and neurological conditions), laboratory diagnostics, mental health support, and survivor care. A significant highlight was the hands-on simulation at CHU Campus, Lomé, which tested participants' clinical response in high-risk scenarios. Evaluation results showed an average improvement of 46% in post-test scores and high satisfaction among participants, with 96% affirming the relevance and applicability of the training content. Participants recommended scaling up similar training across Member States and proposed the development of regional guidelines, training manuals, and cross-border referral frameworks.

Conclusion

This training marks a critical step towards building a resilient regional workforce capable of managing Lassa fever and mitigating its public health impact by fostering harmonized practices, improved detection, and timely clinical interventions.