

Knowledge and preventive practices against viral hemorrhagic fevers amongst adult residents in a North-Central suburban Nigeria community

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Introduction

Viral Hemorrhagic Fevers (VHFs) are severe illnesses caused by RNA viruses, associated with high morbidity and mortality, especially in areas like Nigeria. Communities in suburban North-Central Nigeria face increased risks due to limited awareness and preventive practices regarding VHFs. This study assessed the knowledge, attitudes, and preventive practices concerning VHFs among adults in Agbabiaka, a suburban North-Central community located in Kwara state, Nigeria.

Methods

A cross-sectional study was conducted with 300 adults selected through multistage sampling. Structured questionnaires were used to collect data on sociodemographic profiles, awareness, knowledge, attitudes, and preventive practices. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS v25.0, maintaining ethical standards, including confidentiality and informed consent.

Results

Participants' ages ranged from 18 to over 45 years, with 36% aged 26–35. Females made up 58.7% of respondents. Sixty-two percent reported no prior

awareness of VHFs, while 73% of those aware identified social media as their main information source. Average knowledge scores were 53.7%, with higher education significantly associated with better knowledge ($p < 0.05$). Preventive practices were moderate: 63% recognized the need to avoid rodent consumption, but 57% did not believe regular handwashing was effective against transmission.

Conclusion

Knowledge and preventive practices related to VHFs in this community are lacking. Interventions, such as public health campaigns and community engagement, are necessary to reduce VHF risks. Enhancing primary healthcare systems to incorporate preventive education is recommended for lasting impact.