

Field Epidemiology and Laboratory Training Program to strengthen Gambia public health surveillance system, 2024

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Introduction

The One Health approach recognizes the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health and the need for cross-sectoral collaboration to address zoonotic diseases and emerging public health threats. Integrating this concept into training programs enhances the capacity of health systems to detect, prevent, and respond to complex health challenges. The Field Epidemiology and Laboratory Training Program (FELTP) Frontline model, widely used to strengthen health systems and improve surveillance and response, was adapted in The Gambia to incorporate a One Health approach following regional mentor training by the ECOWAS Regional Centre for Surveillance and Disease Control.

Methods

The Gambia's One Health FELTP Frontline cohort recruited participants from human health, veterinary, and environmental sectors. The training combined classroom instruction with field-based activities focused on disease surveillance, data quality audits, outbreak investigation, fishbone problem analysis, zoonotic disease epidemiology, laboratory techniques, and integration of human-

animal health data. Partnerships with national ministries and agencies supported practical learning and sectoral collaboration.

Results

The program successfully trained multidisciplinary professionals equipped to lead outbreak responses across sectors. Graduates conducted joint investigations of zoonotic disease outbreaks and contributed to national surveillance activities. The initiative fostered strong collaboration between public health, veterinary, and environmental institutions, improving coordinated responses to health threats.

Conclusion

The Gambia's One Health FELTP Frontline cohort demonstrates the value of integrated, cross-sectoral training in strengthening national health systems. By building a skilled, multidisciplinary workforce, the program enhances sustainable disease control and supports a holistic approach to public health.