

Abstract

Knowledge of Lassa Fever Disease and Its Risk Factors Among Rural People in A Nigerian Community [†]

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Abstract: Introduction: Lassa fever disease (LFD) is an acute viral haemorrhagic fever caused by Lassa virus. It is a disease of public health importance in West Africa and a global health threat. It is endemic in some West African countries like Benin, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria, where an estimated 300,000 to 500,000 cases occur every year with an estimated 5000 annual deaths. Persons living in rural areas and health care workers are at greatest risk. Public awareness and knowledge of the LFD and its risk factors are some of the important factors that determine disease transmission and success of preventive/control efforts. This study was therefore conducted to assess LFD-related awareness and knowledge in Gangara, a rural agrarian community in Giwa Local Government Area of Kuduna State, NorthWest Nigeria. **Methods:** A cross-sectional, community based descriptive study conducted in Gangara community. An interviewer-administered questionnaire was used to collect data from 556 adult respondents, selected using systematic random sampling technique. Data was analyzed using SPSS (version 20). **Results:** A majority of the respondents were females (52.9%) with a mean age of 37.0 ± 15.2 . The level of awareness of LFD was high (66.7%) among respondents and there was a statistically significant association between awareness of LFD and not having any form of education ($P < 0.00$). However, most of the respondents (79.0%) have poor knowledge of LFD. Knowledge of risk factors for LFD was also poor with 59.4% not knowing that drying grains and foodstuffs on the ground is a risk factor for LFD. **Conclusions:** Awareness of the disease was quite high but knowledge of the disease and its risk factors was poor. For effective prevention of future outbreaks, the community needs to be properly educated on LFD and its risk factors.

Keywords: knowledge; lassa fever disease; risk factors; rural; Nigeria



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