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Inter-State Transmission of Lassa Fever during the 2015–2016 Lassa Outbreak in Nigeria: An Implication for Infection Prevention and Control Practices

Transmission Interétatique de la Fièvre de Lassa Lors de l'Épidémie de Lassa de 2015–2016 au Nigeria: Implication pour les Pratiques de Prévention et de Contrôle des Infections

^{1*}Y. Mohammed, ²U. I. Bello, ³C. C. Chinaka, ³M. Onuoha, ³M. Sarki, ²S. S. Yahaya, ⁴K. Suleiman, ³M. M. Dalhat

ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND: Lassa fever is an acute hemorrhagic viral disease caused by the Lassa virus. The Lassa virus belongs to the Arenaviridae family of RNA viruses. On 05/04/2016; two cases of Lassa fever were reported from Katsina State with the date of presentation of the first case on 23/03/2016 and 27/03/2016 for the second case. We investigated the outbreak to identify the agent and the source and propose recommendations as well as to assess the practice of infection, prevention and control (IPC).

METHODS: We used descriptive study to describe contact tracing and facility assessment. We described the outbreak by time, place, and person. We defined a case using established guidelines and line-listed the contacts. We conducted IPC facility check in the state. Blood specimens were collected for Lassa fever detection. Microsoft Excel and Epi-info version 7.1.6 were used for data analysis.

RESULTS: The index case of Lassa fever in Katsina State was seen on 23/03/2016 with a travel history from Kaduna State. The second case had contact with a positive Lassa fever case from Gwagwalada, Federal Capital Territory (FCT). A total of 82 contacts were line listed (9 developed Lassa fever). The case fatality rate was 27.3%. IPC checklist revealed 37.5% of the health facilities lacked personal protective equipment and safety boxes, 25% lacked isolation wards, and none had chlorine solution. Overall, 61% of personnel had poor knowledge of Lassa fever, 31% had fair knowledge and 8% had good knowledge.

CONCLUSION: A multiple-source epidemic with sources of primary infection from outside Katsina state was noted. Most of the health facilities assessed lack basic IPC materials and knowledge on Lassa fever which should be addressed. **WAJM 2023; 40(7): 684–688.**

Keywords: Epidemiology, Infection Control, Katsina, Outbreak, Lassa fever.

RÉSUMÉ

CONTEXTE: La fièvre de Lassa est une maladie virale hémorragique aiguë causée par le virus de Lassa. Le virus Lassa appartient à la famille des Arenaviridae, des virus à ARN. Le 05/04/2016 ; deux cas de fièvre de Lassa ont été signalés dans l'État de Katsina avec la date de présentation du premier cas le 23/03/2016 et le 27/03/2016 pour le second cas. Nous avons enquêté sur cette épidémie pour identifier l'agent et la source et proposer des recommandations ainsi que pour évaluer la pratique de l'infection, de la prévention et du contrôle (IPC).

MÉTHODES: Nous avons utilisé une étude descriptive pour décrire la recherche des contacts et l'évaluation des installations. Nous avons décrit l'épidémie en fonction de la date, du lieu et de la personne. Nous avons défini un cas à l'aide de lignes directrices établies et dressé une liste des contacts. Nous avons vérifié les installations de CIP dans l'État. Des échantillons de sang ont été prélevés pour la détection de la fièvre de Lassa. Microsoft Excel et Epi-info version 7.1.6 ont été utilisés pour l'analyse des données.

RÉSULTATS: Le cas index de fièvre de Lassa dans l'État de Katsina a été observé le 23/03/2016 avec des antécédents de voyage en provenance de l'État de Kaduna. Le deuxième cas a été en contact avec un cas positif de fièvre de Lassa à Gwagwalada, dans le Territoire de la capitale fédérale (FCT). Au total, 82 contacts ont été répertoriés (9 ont développé une fièvre de Lassa). Le taux de létalité était de 27,3 %. La liste de contrôle IPC a révélé que 37,5 % des établissements de santé manquaient d'équipements de protection individuelle et de boîtes de sécurité, que 25 % n'avaient pas de salles d'isolement et qu'aucun n'avait de solution chlorée. Dans l'ensemble, 61 % du personnel avait une mauvaise connaissance de la fièvre de Lassa, 31 % une connaissance moyenne et 8 % une bonne connaissance.

CONCLUSION: Une épidémie à sources multiples avec des sources d'infection primaire en dehors de l'État de Katsina a été observée. La plupart des établissements de santé évalués manquent de matériel IPC de base et de connaissances sur la fièvre de Lassa, ce qui devrait être corrigé. **WAJM 2023; 40(7): 684–688.**

Mots clés: Épidémiologie, Contrôle des infections, Katsina, Épidémie, Fièvre de Lassa.

¹Department of Medical Microbiology and Parasitology, Faculty of Basic Clinical Sciences, College of Health Sciences, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto State, Nigeria. ²Department of Public Health, Ministry of Health, Katsina, Katsina State, Nigeria. ³Nigeria Field Epidemiology & Laboratory Training Programme (NFELTP), Abuja, Nigeria. ⁴State Primary Healthcare Development Agency, Katsina State, Nigeria.

*Correspondence: Dr. Yahaya Mohammed, Department of Medical Microbiology and Parasitology, Faculty of Basic Clinical Sciences, College of Health Sciences, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto State, Nigeria. Email: yahyakt@yahoo.com Mobile Number: +234(0)8036867478.