# Assessment of Lassa fever reporting among healthcare workers in a Southwest State, Nigeria

P2-L2

**Adewale M Adejugbagbe** [1], Ayokunle T Orimolade [2], Johnson O Feyisike [2], Stephen O Fagbemi [2], Elvis E Isere [1], Aderonke T Fagbemi [3]

[1]Department of Epidemiology and Medical Statistics, Faculty of Public Health, University of Ibadan, Nigeria; [2]Department of Public Health, Ondo State Ministry of Health, Nigeria, [3]Department of Planning Research and Statistics, Hospital Management Board, Ondo State Nigeria

We found a ***sub-optimal*** level of Lassa fever reporting by health workers, predominantly among those working in secondary health facility, not previously trained on Lassa Fever and with low work experience

## BACKGROUND

- Lassa fever (LF) is an acute viral hemorrhagic disease endemic in Nigeria, with a recent surge in cases and expanded geographical spread.
- Ondo State, had the highest confirmed cases (433 cases) and deaths (Case Fatality Rate; CFR-11.5%) in Nigeria by the end of 2023.
- Disease surveillance and notification (DSN) is a crucial strategy recommended for the prevention and control of epidemic-prone diseases like LF. The DSN involves the official reporting of diseases or events to designated authorities by healthcare workers using the recommended reporting tools.
- Preliminary investigations of recent LF outbreaks suggests that delayed or non-reporting of suspected LF cases by healthcare workers is linked to delayed case management, contributing to a high CFR in Ondo State.
- Understanding the underlying factors associated with delayed or non-reporting of LF cases among healthcare workers is essential for designing targeted interventions to reduce high CFR in future LF outbreaks.
- We assessed the knowledge, attitude and reporting practices of LF, and factors associated with sub-optimal reporting of LF cases among healthcare workers in Ondo State, Nigeria.

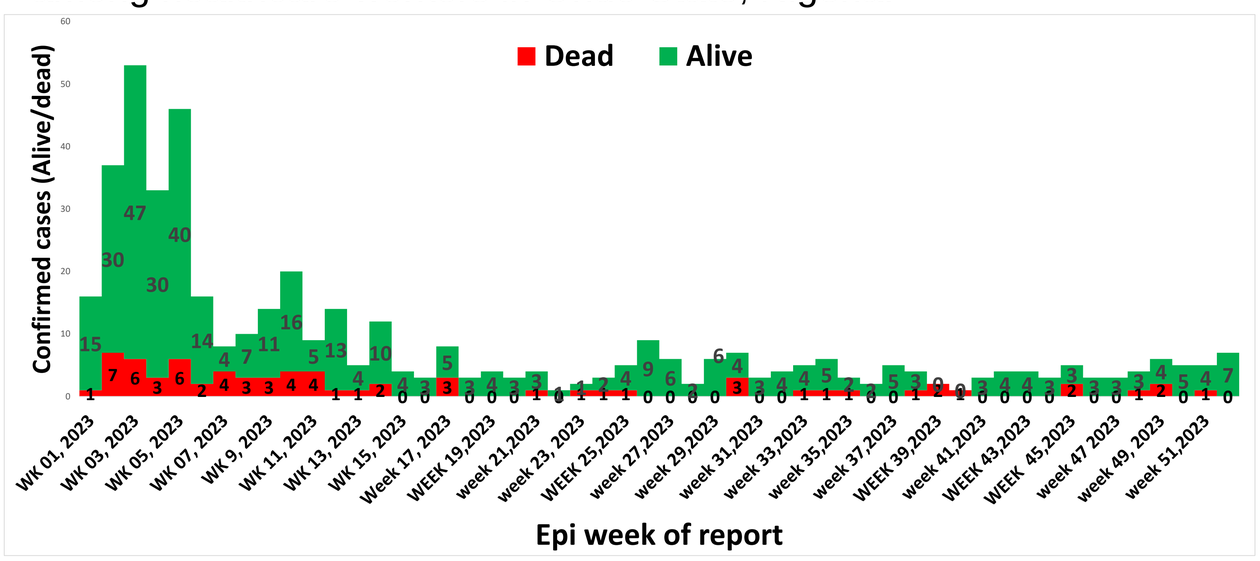


**Figure 1: Epi-curve of Lassa fever confirmed cases in Ondo State Nigeria, 2023**

## METHODS

- A cross-sectional study was conducted among healthcare workers in Ondo State Nigeria.
- A total of 32 health facilities that have reported Lassa fever confirmed cases and deaths between 1st January to 14th June 2023 were included in the study.
- Reporting of LF in the last one year was compared with socio-demographic characteristics, training on LF, working years of experience, knowledge of LF and attitude to reporting communicable diseases, using both Chi-Square and binary logistics regression analysis
- Significance threshold was p= < 0.05

## RESULTS

- A total of 214 respondents were interviewed with a mean age of 37.8 years (standard deviation: 10.1).
- Generally, 145 (67.8%) had good knowledge of Lassa fever and 85% had positive attitude to reporting communicable diseases.
- One hundred and twenty-six (58.9%) of the respondents had reported at least a case of Lassa fever in the last one year.
- Significant predictors of LF reporting were; working in a tertiary (AOR=2.35, CI= 1.09- 5.03) and primary health care facility (AOR; 3.4, CI=1.54- 7.60), received training on LF case reporting (AOR, 3.1; 95% CI= 1.63-5.99) and high (> 10) years of experience as healthcare worker (AOR, 2.45; 95% CI: 1.20- 5.02).

## RESULTS CONTINUED

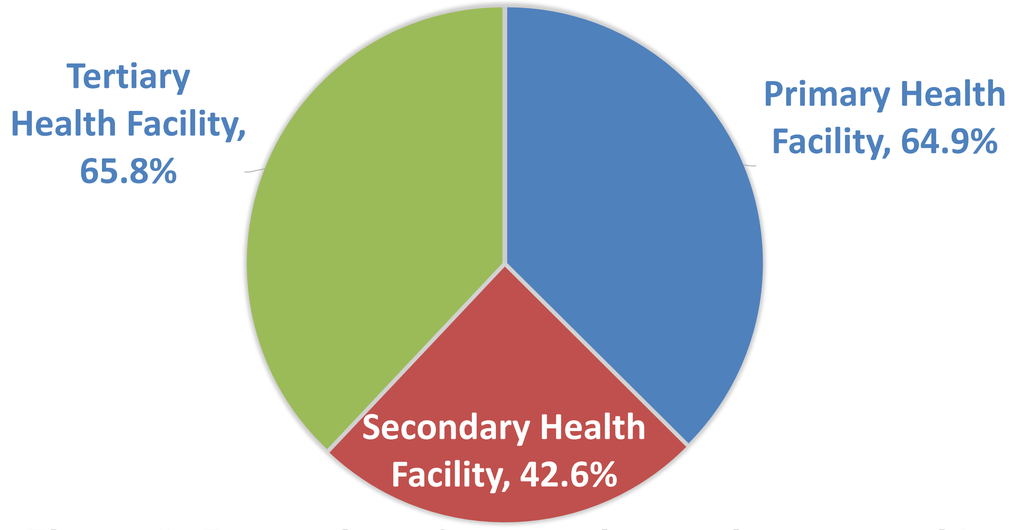


**Figure 2: Proportion of respondents who reported Lassa fever cases by type of health facility**

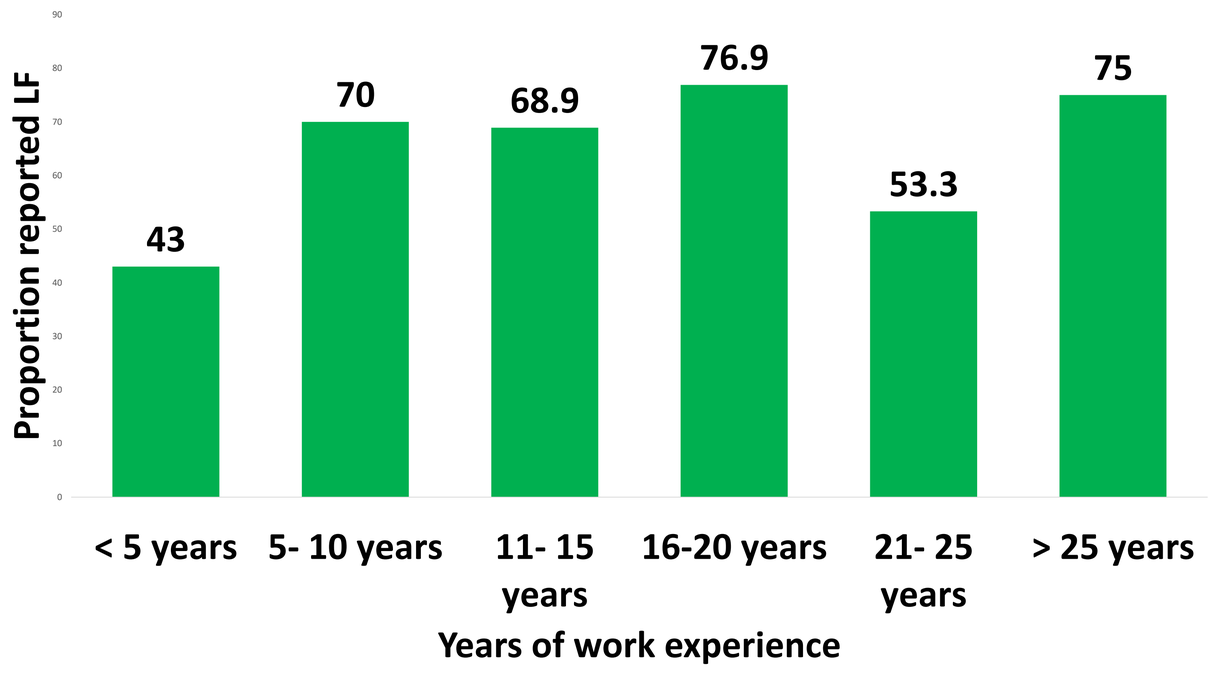


**Figure 3: Proportion of respondents who reported Lassa fever cases by years of work experience**

## CONCLUSIONS

- The study found sub-optimal reporting of Lassa fever, particularly among a significant proportion of healthcare workers who were working in secondary health facility, not previously trained on Lassa fever and had low years of working experience.
- The study findings underscore the need to intensify training, coaching and mentoring visits to the health workers, targeting mostly those working in a secondary health facility, not trained on Lassa fever and recently recruited.
- Building the capacity of healthcare workers to identify and report suspected cases of Lassa fever timely could further enhance early case detection and response, as well as reduce morbidity and mortality from the disease.

**Conflicts of interest**: The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

**Acknowledgement**: The authors appreciate the funding and technical support received from the World Health Organization and the relentless efforts of the Ondo State Rapid Response Team (RRT) in the data collection process.