

Lassa fever kills 21 in Nigeria: health officials

January 31 2018

Twenty-one people have died from Lassa fever in Nigeria this month, the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control said on Wednesday, in the latest outbreak in Africa's most populous nation.

"Since the beginning of 2018, 80 cases have been classified as: 77 confirmed cases, three probable cases with 21 deaths," the NCDC said on Twitter.

Cases have been reported in 13 of 36 states while 10 [health care workers](#) had been affected, it added.

Lassa fever belongs to the same family as Marburg and Ebola, two [deadly viruses](#) that lead to infections with fever, vomiting and in worst-case scenarios, haemorrhagic bleeding.

Its name comes from the town of Lassa in northern Nigeria where it was first identified in 1969.

More than one hundred people were killed in 2016 in one of the nation's worst outbreaks of the disease, affecting 14 of the 36 states, including Lagos and the capital Abuja.

The virus is spread through contact with food or household items contaminated with rats' urine or faeces or after coming into direct contact with the bodily fluids of an infected person.

The disease can be prevented through enhanced personal hygiene, avoidance of all contact with rats and keeping the house and surrounding clean.

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