

Nigeria moves to contain rising Lassa fever cases

January 27 2022

Nigeria has set up an emergency response centre to contain rising cases of Lassa fever after 26 people were killed in the past three weeks, the country's disease control agency said.

Endemic to Nigeria, Lassa fever belongs to the same family as the Ebola and Marburg viruses, but is much less deadly.

The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) said on Wednesday it had activated the national Lassa fever Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) in response to the outbreak in some parts of the country.

"As of 23rd January 2022, a total of 115 confirmed cases with 26 deaths (a case fatality ratio of 22.6%) have been reported," the NCDC said.

"These cases were reported from thirty (30) local government areas (LGAs) across eleven (11) states."

Lassa [fever](#) is spread by contact with rat faeces or urine or the bodily fluids of an infected person.

Most of those infected do not show symptoms but severe bleeding and [organ failure](#) can occur in about a fifth of cases.

Infection numbers in Nigeria typically climb around the start of the year, a phenomenon that is linked to the dry season.

The virus takes its name from the town of Lassa in northern Nigeria, where it was first identified in 1969.

Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation of some 210 million people, is also battling with COVID-19 which has so far infected 252,753 people and claimed 3,134 lives, according to an official tally.

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Citation: Nigeria moves to contain rising Lassa fever cases (2022, January 27) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-01-nigeria-lassa-fever-cases.html>

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