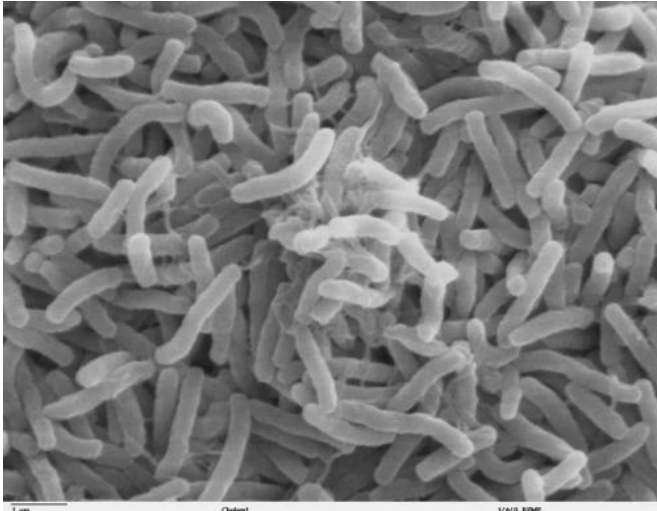


Cholera kills over 2,300 in Nigeria's worst outbreak in years

20 September 2021



Scanning electron microscope image of *Vibrio cholerae* bacteria, which infect the digestive system. Credit: Ronald Taylor, Tom Kirn, Louisa Howard/Wikipedia

Cholera has killed more than 2,300 people and infected thousands more, mostly children, in Nigeria since the start of the year, a senior health official said on Monday, in the nation's worst outbreak in years.

Africa's most populous nation suffers from a high rate of water-borne diseases as a result of dilapidated infrastructure and under-investment.

"As at September 5, 2021, a total of 69,925 suspected cases, including 2,323 deaths, have been reported," Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) head of communications, Yahya Disu, told AFP.

Health sector sources said this year's outbreak, with a higher fatality rate than the previous four years, was worsened by the priority given to the coronavirus epidemic. COVID-19 has infected more than 200,000 people in Nigeria and claimed

2,655 lives since February 2020.

Disu said the cases were reported in 25 of Nigeria's 36 states and the capital, Abuja.

Children aged between five and 14 were the most affected, he said, adding that the 19 [northern states](#) accounted for 98 percent of infections.

"Three northern states—Bauchi, Kano and Jigawa—account for 52 percent of cases," he added.

Disu said heavy flooding, [poor sanitation](#) and [climate change](#) could have accounted for the surge in cholera outbreaks in the country this year.

Nigeria has previously experienced large [cholera outbreaks](#), including in 1991, 2010, 2014, and 2017.

However, epidemiological patterns of the current outbreak could threaten to outpace the death toll from previous outbreaks.

Still, Disu said the trend appeared to be declining.

"There was a 58 percent decrease in the number of new suspected cases in the week under review (1,667) compared to the previous week (3,992)," he said.

He said health personnel and drugs have been sent to the affected areas while public sensitisation campaigns on [water sanitation](#) and [personal hygiene](#) have been intensified.

Cholera is a water-borne bacterial infection that affects the intestinal track and is characterised by vomiting, watery stools, dehydration and fatigue.

It can be transmitted by flies when they come in contact with food and can be fatal if not treated in time.

UN children agency UNICEF is worried children were the worst affected by the outbreak.

"There is a growing concern with millions of children in Nigeria affected by the recent cholera outbreak in the country, which is termed as one of the worst ever recorded," UNICEF Nigeria official Oumar Doumbouya said in a statement.

UNICEF is providing support through water, sanitation, and hygiene as well as health and behaviour change interventions to support Nigeria's government with the [outbreak](#).

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