

LASSA FEVER OUTBREAK: FEDERAL MEDICAL CENTRE, OWO STORY.

Lassa fever is a viral haemorrhagic disease with an incubation period of 7 – 14 days with an acute illness that can last for 2-4 weeks. The virus is transmitted to human by a species of African peridomestic rodent, *Mastomys natalensis*. The disease has a mortality rate of 10-40%. Currently, there is an outbreak of Lassa fever in Ondo state which started in January 2023.

Federal Medical Centre, Owo is the centre of excellence in the management of infectious diseases like Lassa fever and COVID-19 disease has taken up the task in the management and control of the outbreak. Federal Medical Centre, Owo started managing Lassa fever in January 2017 and the hospital has played a prominent role in the activation of the Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) to respond to the outbreak of Lassa fever in Owo Local Government and Ondo State in general. The Centre was awarded the most improved treatment centre for Lassa fever case management in Nigeria at the International Conference on Lassa fever in 2019 (Figure 1 and 2). The Centre's molecular laboratory was also given an award of excellence by Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDC) in December 2022 (Figure 3).



Figure 1: Award for most improved treatment centre for Lassa fever in Nigeria



Figure 2: Award for most improved treatment centre for Lassa fever in Nigeria



Figure 3: Award of excellence to Federal Medical Centre Owo Molecular Laboratory

Infection Control and Research Centre, Federal Medical Centre, Owo comprises of the following:

1. 37 bedded Lassa fever treatment centre.
2. 36 bedded multipurpose treatment centre for the management of infectious diseases (Figure 4).
3. 4 bedded intensive care unit.
4. New ultramodern Molecular laboratory (Figure 5) fully equipped with modern laboratory equipment, PCR machine and BSL-3 safety equipment (Figure 6, 7 and 8).
5. Haemodialysis centre for infectious diseases (Figure 9).



Figure 4: ISOLATION CENTRE



Figure 5: MOLECULAR LABORATORY



Figure 6: MOLECULAR LABORATORY EQUIPMENT



Figure 7: MOLECULAR LABORATORY EQUIPMENT

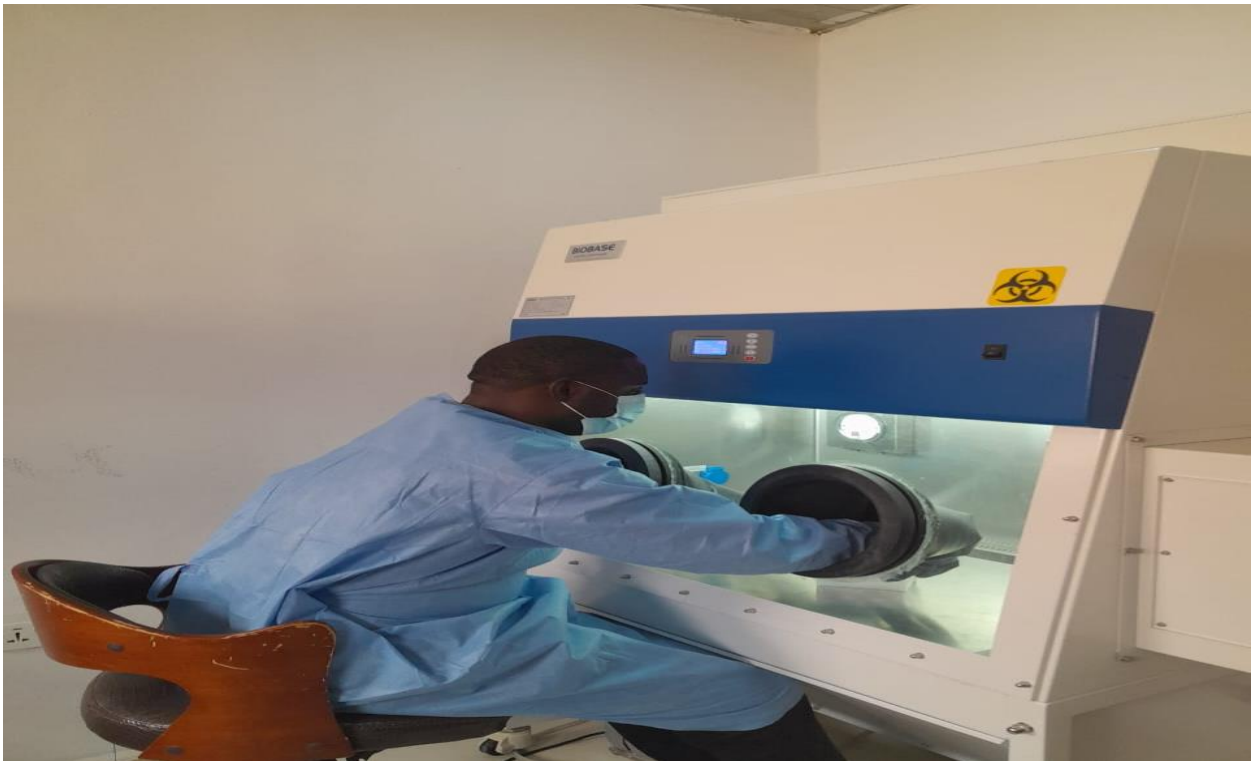


Figure 8: A SCIENTIST WORKING IN THE MOLECULAR LABORATORY



Figure 9: HEMODIALYSIS CENTRE IN THE ISOLATION WARD

In December 2022, there were 24 confirmed cases of Lassa fever while in January 2023 there were 157 cases.

Lassa fevers January statistics are shown below:

Total confirmed Lassa fever = 157

Total admission = 91

Confirmed cases = 85

Suspected cases = 6

Discharged = 55

Confirmed cases discharged = 49

Suspected cases discharged = 6

Death = 11

With this outbreak, there is urgent call for more support and help from government, philanthropist, non-governmental organizations and the community in curbing the spread of Lassa fever.