

EXPOSURE AND ATTITUDE OF AWKA SOUTH RESIDENTS TOWARDS ONE HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE'S (OHDI) FACEBOOK CAMPAIGN ON THE PREVENTION OF LASSA FEVER

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ABSTRACT

First recorded in Nigeria in 1969, Lassa fever is not new but continues to manifest in epidemic proportions and as endemic or sporadic outbreaks. Unfortunately, Lassa fever control was until quite recently, neglected in Nigeria. This failure allowed the outbreaks to gain in frequency and severity with many deaths, including that of health-care workers. To help in the fight against the disease, One Health and Development Initiative (OHDI) embarked on a Facebook campaign on the prevention of the disease. Since the platform has many users around the world who use them for different things, this study sought to find out whether users of the platform in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State, have been exposed to the campaign and their attitude towards the campaign. To achieve this, the researcher sought to ascertain their level of exposure to the campaign, their attitude towards the campaign and the extent to which they put the measures of the campaign into practice. This was done using the descriptive survey research design. With the 2024 projected population of Awka South residents which is 298, 895 and the Taro Yamane formula, the researcher determined the samples (399) of this study before randomly selecting them for the study from three communities (Amawbia, Awka and Okpuno) in Awka South. The researcher administered 399 structured and pre-tested copies of questionnaire to the selected 399 respondents and retrieved only 393 copies that were used for this study. In analyzing the data that was collected from the survey exercise, the researcher used frequency tables and simple percentages. From the study, the researcher found, among others, that Awka South residents are highly exposed to the selected OHDI's Facebook campaign. Based on the findings that were made from this study, the researcher recommended, among others, that Awka South residents should always expose themselves to OHDI's Facebook campaign on the prevention of Lassa fever so as to always remember what they should do to avoid contacting and spreading the disease.

INTRODUCTION

Lassa fever (a rare viral hemorrhagic fever) is a disease of immense public health significance. It was discovered in 1969 in Lassa village in Borno State Nigeria following the death of two American missionary nurses (Akinbodewa, Adejumo, Alli, Olarewaju, Akinbodewa, Osho, Akinfiresoye & Balogun (2016). The etiological agent is the Lassa fever virus that is found in West African countries like Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea and spread by its reservoir (Nasir, Sani, Augusto & Pereira, 2015). The multi-mammate rat *Mastomys natalensis* is the host (Tomori, Fisher-Hoch, Nasidi, Perez-Oronoz, Fakile, Hutwagner & McCormick, 2014). It is an acute viral zoonotic disease that may cause multi-organ failure and immune suppression (Jiang, Huang, Wang, Dong, Ly, Liang & Dong cited in Amodu & Fapohunda, 2019).

Transmission is by direct contact with excretions or secretions (including feces and urine) of infected rats on food items and water inside human residences and other centres with human activities (Amodu & Fapohunda, 2019). Other possible routes, according to them, are bruised skin or other body parts directly exposed to infectious material. Epidemics arising from human-to-human transmission have equally been established in healthcare institutions in West Africa. It is endemic in West Africa, with 300,000-500,000 cases and 5,000 deaths occurring yearly across Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia (Amodu &

Fapohunda, 2019). A significant percentage of the infections remain asymptomatic, mild or self-limiting and may pass unnoticed (World Health Organization, 2017). The infection occurs majorly in the dry season even though it can be observed throughout the year. It is not age- or gender-dependent. However, given the ubiquity of the rodent host, antibody prevalence tends to increase with age. This may explain the virus transmission to humans in and around the homes where the *Mastomys* live (Nasir *et al.*, 2015).

The virus has been associated with nosocomial outbreaks resulting in high mortality in affected areas (Ajayi, Nwigwe, Azuogu, Onyire & Nwonwu, 2013 cited in Amodu & Fapohunda, 2019). Poverty and lack of education are twin candidate predisposing factors. Compared to Human immunodeficiency virus infection, the spread of the Lassa virus infection is more rapid among close associates and it rapidly kills (Amodu & Fapohunda, 2019). Although certain progress was made in understanding the replication pattern, Nigeria and other West African countries have continued to experience frequent community and nosocomial outbreaks, sometimes with significant fatalities and serious economic burden. Lamenting the situation in Nigeria, the Punch Editorial Board (2024) stated that a total of 174 from 833 confirmed cases in 2019. In 2020, according to the newspaper, 244 Nigerians died from 1, 189 confirmed cases; 79 died from 418 confirmed cases in 2021. In 2022, the Punch Editorial Board (2024) further stated that Nigeria reported 1, 067 confirmed cases across 27 States and 112 Local Government Areas. In 2023 too, 28 States and 114 Local Government Areas reported confirmed cases, with 9, 155 suspected cases, 1, 270 confirmed cases and 227 deaths. As of October 13 of this year (2024), according to the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) cited in Punch Editorial Board (2024), Nigeria recorded 1, 035 confirmed cases and 174 deaths in 28 States across 129 Local Government Areas.

The mass media are active partners with health officials in health information delivery to a considerable number of persons, thereby shaping public discourse and the formation of public opinion on health matters (Adesina, Omojola, Imhonopi, Adeyeye, Ben-Enukora, Aneke, 2021). Mass media partnerships with health officials across the globe have been a strong weapon for mobilizing the public in the fight against epidemics and pandemics (Ben-Enukora, Adeyeye, Adesina, Ajakaiye & Adekanye, 2022). Again, the internet and social media present new opportunities for communicating health messages albeit the enormous unsubstantiated information dissemination by nonprofessionals (Kumar, 2018; Lee, 2019; Wang, McKee, Torbica & Stuckler, 2019). Taking advantage of the new opportunities, One Health and Development Initiative embarked on a campaign on the prevention of Lassa fever using the social media (Facebook). Since there would not have been this Facebook campaign without the social media platform, it means that there was an active partnership of the platform with One Health and Development Initiative which is why the campaign is out there on the platform for the sensitization of social media users, including those in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State. In view of this, the researcher sought to ascertain Awka South residents' exposure and attitude towards the campaign.

To ascertain Awka South resident' exposure and attitude towards One Health and Development Initiative's Facebook campaign on the prevention of Lassa fever, the researcher aimed:

1. To find out Awka South residents' level of exposure to the campaign.
2. To examine Awka South residents' attitude towards the campaign.
3. To determine the extent to which Awka South residents' put the measures of the campaign into practice.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Review

Concept of Lassa Fever

Lassa fever occurs in both sexes and all age groups. It is a zoonotic disease whose reservoir is the multimammate rat of the genus *Mastomys* (Enemuo & Obayi, 2021). Lassa fever is a viral haemorrhagic fever caused by a single stranded RNA virus belonging to the *Arenaviridae* family (March, Ajayi, Nwigwe, Azuogu, Onyire & Nwonwu, 2013 cited in Enemuo & Obayi, 2021). The virus is a member of the virus family *Arenaviridae*, is a single-stranded RNA virus and is zoonotic, or animal-borne, transmitted by rats (Enemuo & Obayi, 2021). It has the potential to cause tens of thousands of deaths. Even after recovery, the virus remains in body fluids, including semen (World Health Organization, 2000 cited in Enemuo & Obayi,

2021). It has been known since the 1950s, but the virus was not identified until 1969, when two missionary nurses died from it in the town of Lassa in Nigeria (WHO, 2017).

Lassa fever, a viral haemorrhagic fever transmitted by rats, is endemic in West Africa (Nigeria inclusive) and may kill tens of thousands of people each year (Enemuo & Obayi, 2021). Peak incidence was thought to be in the dry season (January to March), but data collected in Sierra Leone shows peaks in the overlap with the wet season [May to November] (Saka, Gubio, Kerecvel, Saka & Oyemakinde, 2017). They are probably the most common rodent in tropical Africa and are found predominantly in rural areas and in dwellings more often than in surrounding countryside (Enemuo & Obayi, 2021). Lassa fever, according to them, is endemic in West Africa, with 300,000 to 500,000 cases and 5000 deaths occurring yearly across Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia. However, between 70-80% of Lassa virus infections, remain asymptomatic, mild or self-limiting and in most cases may pass unnoticed (Nasir, Sani, Augusto & Pereira, 2015).

Transmission of Lassa virus to humans occurs most commonly through ingestion or inhalation (Enemuo & Obayi, 2021). They stated that *mastomys* rodents shed the virus in urine and droppings and direct contact with these materials, through touching soiled objects, eating contaminated food, or exposure to open cuts or sores, can lead to infection. Many persons infected by the virus do not develop symptoms, but when symptoms occur they typically include fever, weakness, headaches, vomiting, and muscle pains (Enemuo & Obayi, 2021). Less commonly, there may be bleeding from the mouth or gastrointestinal tract. Direct contact with infected rodents is not the only way in which people are infected; person-to-person transmission may occur after exposure to virus in blood, tissue, secretions, or excretions of a Lassa virus-infected individual (Enemuo & Obayi, 2021). Casual contact such as skin-to-skin contact without exchange of body fluids does not spread Lassa virus. Lassa virus may be spread through contaminated medical equipment, such as reused needles.

Lassa fever presents with symptoms and signs indistinguishable from those of febrile illnesses such as malaria and other viral haemorrhagic fevers such as Ebola (Enemuo & Obayi, 2021). According to them, it is difficult to diagnose clinically but should be suspected in patients with fever ($\geq 38^{\circ}\text{C}$) not responding adequately to antimalarial and antibiotic drugs. They further stated that the most useful clinical predictors of Lassa fever are fever, pharyngitis, retrosternal pain, and proteinuria for diagnosis; and fever, sore throat, and vomiting. Even after recovery, according to them, there may be residual problems such as sensorineural hearing loss. The initial presentation of Lassa fever may be with non-specific symptoms similar to what is seen in the more common febrile illnesses such as malaria or typhoid fever. In such a setting therefore, timely diagnosis of Lassa fever may be difficult (Chime, Chime, Ndibuagu, Ekochin, Arinze-Onyia & Oti, 2020). Complications include mucosal bleeding, sensorineural hearing deficit, pleural effusion and pericardial effusion while the outcome is related to the degree of viraemia, not the antibody response, and is worse with high levels of aspartate aminotransferase (Enemuo & Obayi, 2021).

In majority of Lassa fever virus infections (approximately 80%) in endemic areas, the symptoms are mild and are undiagnosed (Enemuo & Obayi, 2021). Mild symptoms include slight fever, general malaise and weakness, and headache. In 20% of infected individuals, however, the disease may progress to more serious symptoms including hemorrhaging (in gums, eyes, or nose, as examples), respiratory distress, repeated vomiting, facial swelling, pain in the chest, back, and abdomen, and shock with significant fatality (40-50%) especially during epidemic outbreaks (Richmond & Baglole, 2017; Centre for Disease Control, 2015). Generally, the incubation period ranges from 6 to 21 days (McCormick, *et al.*, 2017 cited in Enemuo & Obayi, 2021; Lassa Fever | Viral Hemorrhagic Fever Consortium, 2017).

Lassa fever outbreaks in endemic areas are invariably fuelled by every activity or factor that promotes increased contact between man and rodents. They include poor sanitation, crowding, deforestation, rodent hunting, bush burning, civil unrest, and agricultural activities such as rice cultivation that provides food supplies for rodents (Richmond & Baglole, 2017). However, individual and community preventive strategies include keeping good and healthy personal hygiene, cleaning of homes and the surrounding environment, and waste should be emptied far away from homes (Enemuo & Obayi, 2021). Spreading of food where rats can have access to it, e.g. by the road side, should be avoided. Storage of foodstuff and water should be done in rat proof containers (Ogoina, 2013). Also, control of rodents by avoiding bush burning, setting traps in and around homes to reduce rat population, blockage of all rat hideouts, and avoidance of contact with rats

such as rat hunting for consumption, are some preventive measures that can be taken to curb the spread of Lassa fever (Enemu & Obayi, 2021).

Concept of Media Exposure

The term exposure means the process of seeing, hearing and/or reading media or interpersonal messages (Uzochukwu, Nwosu & Okeke, 2022). These messages, Nwosu, Okeke and Chiaghana (2020), note, may include political, educational, financial and/or health messages. Having stated this, mass media exposure, is a conscious activity which indicates that audiences' use of the media is goal-directed (Ekanem & Idiong, 2014). According to them, exposure can be direct and indirect, for example, buying and reading a sports newspaper instead of a general interest newspaper or tuning to and viewing a news channel instead of a sports channel. On the other hand, indirect exposure may occur through people who relay contents of a newspaper they have read to others (Ekanem & Idiong, 2014). Explaining this process further, Okunna (1999, p. 102) cited in Ekanem and Idiong (2014) says "the audience can also have indirect exposure to mass communication, that is, receive mass media messages indirectly or second hand through people who have direct exposure to the mass media". This process she explains, is prevalent among media audiences who have limited access to the contents of the media due to financial or educational constraints. She emphasized that most of those who engage in relaying contents to others, are predominantly opinion leaders. Mass media exposures can promote awareness of an issue, enhance knowledge and beliefs, and reinforce existing attitudes (Calvert, 2011 cited in Igbino, Soola, Omojola, Odukoya, Adekeye & Salau, 2020; Khan & Ali, 2017).

Concept of Attitude

Attitude refers to the general and relatively enduring evaluations people have of other people, objects, or ideas. These overall evaluations can be positive, negative, or neutral, and can vary in their extremity (Cross, 1974 cited in Okenyi, 2017). A positive attitude is optimistic, enthusiastic, and supportive. Negative attitudes are pessimistic, critical and resistant (Ogungbemi, Ajiboye & Ogungbemi, 2024). Meanwhile, a neutral attitude, according to them, is indifferent, important, and unemotional. Attitude could be defined as the tendency to respond to a phenomenon positively or negatively in a consistent and evaluative manner (Ogungbemi *et al.*, 2024).

Attitudes obviously play significant roles in an individual's thoughts, feelings, and actions on any subject of consideration (Ogungbemi *et al.*, 2024). It is a confirmed position that people who exhibit less openness and receptivity to ongoing thoughts and feelings exhibit activation in limbic system structures when they rapidly label thoughts and feelings as either negative or positive (Creswell *et al.*, 2007 cited in Ogungbemi *et al.*, 2024). Attitude has to do with a mental or emotional disposition towards something. It can influence behavior, perceptions, relationships, decision-making and well-being and can be changed and developed through self-awareness, experience, influence, practice, and mindfulness (Ogungbemi *et al.*, 2024).

One Health and Development Initiative (OHDI)

One Health and Development Initiative (OHDI) is a nonprofit and media organization that works to promote news, education, advocacy and solutions to interrelated issues of animal, human and ecosystem health through an integrated One Health approach (One Health Commission, 2024). Its mission, according to the Commission, is rooted in the belief that public health issues are intertwined across animal, human and environmental ecosystems thereby requiring a holistic approach to effective and sustainable solutions. Therefore, in implementing its various activities through social impact and health programs, media projects, advocacy and research, the core values of "One Health" is consistently integrated to achieve sustainable results in health promotion and sustainable development (One Health Commission, 2024).

One Health and Development Initiative's (OHDI) Campaign on the Prevention of Lassa Fever

Lassa fever, serious viral illness, primarily affects West African countries and communities.

It is a zoonotic disease with rapid human-to-human transmission, which causes several fatal human casualties.

The natural reservoir for the Lassa virus is the multimammate rat common in the West African region.

Humans can contract the virus through contact with infected rodents and their droppings on food, water sources, surface areas, and, generally, in the environment.

Poor sanitation and inadequate food storage create ideal conditions for these rodents to thrive, thereby increasing the risk of transmission from animals to humans.

Also, due to its high transmissibility, it is a huge health risk to health workers.

Addressing Lassa fever effectively, requires a One Health approach, where human, animal, and environmental health sectors work together.

This includes rodent control, risk communication and community engagement, effective WASH (Water Sanitation and Hygiene) in communities, IPC in healthcare facilities, and more collaborative efforts to break the transmission cycle.

In response to the rapidly increasing cases of Lassa fever in Nigeria and to strengthen the coordination of response efforts, the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDC) has activated the National Multisectoral Emergency Operations Centre for Lassa fever.

Such concerted effort is important in combating this public health threat.

By working together, we can safeguard human health, promote a healthier environment, and ultimately control the spread of Lassa fever.

Empirical Review

To determine the health risk practices associated with reoccurrence of Lassa fever outbreaks among households in Ebonyi State, Elom, Nnebuife, Okere, Ogba, Okeh, Offormah, Asuzu, Ngozika and Ngwakwe (2024) adopted a cross-sectional survey research design and used the multi-stage sampling procedure to select the 468 heads of households who they administered questionnaires to. Out of the 468 copies of questionnaire that were distributed, 462 copies were returned and used for this study while the data that was collected was analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The hypotheses of this study, were tested using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and t-test statistics. From this study, it was found, among others, that the households in Ebonyi State practice risk associated with reoccurrence of Lassa fever. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended, among others, that there should be proper education of households in Ebonyi State through seminar, workshops and conferences on Lassa fever by health educators and community health workers. This study was conducted in Ebonyi State while the current study was conducted in Anambra State.

In another study to determine the knowledge, attitude and prevention of Lassa fever transmission among women in Nnewi North Local Government Area of Anambra State, Areji, Onyenemezu, Ubah, Akosa, Okeke, Onyenemezu, Okonkwo, Ikwuka and Ezike (2023), did a cross-sectional study of the women using pre-tested interviewer-administered questionnaire. 252 women were selected for this study using multi-stage sampling procedure while the data that was collected was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25, descriptive and inferential statistics. From this study, it was found, among others, that there is high level of knowledge, good attitude towards the prevention of Lassa fever and good practice of its preventive measures among the women. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended, among others, that there should be continued sensitization of the populace via electronic and print media on Lassa fever and the involvement of healthcare workers in these sensitization campaigns. This study dwelled on knowledge, attitude and prevention of Lassa fever transmission while the current study dwelled on the exposure and attitude towards Facebook campaign on the prevention of Lassa fever.

In an investigation to find out the role of newspapers in the reportage of Lassa fever issue in Edo State, Guanah (2022) adopted the survey research design and covered a one-year period between May and June 2016. Guanah (2022) selected 384 respondents from the three Senatorial Districts (Edo North, Edo Central and Edo South) in Edo State using multi-stage sampling procedure and administered 384 copies of valid and reliable questionnaire to them. Out of the 384 distributed questionnaires, only 374 were returned and used for this study. In analyzing the data collected from this survey exercise, simple frequency distribution tables,

simple percentages and numbers were used for easy interpretation. From this study, it was found, among others, that the respondents were enthusiastic about the coverage given to Lassa fever outbreak by the selected newspapers. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended, among others, that the media, particularly newspapers, should continually facilitate and sustain the discourse on Lassa fever, especially among policy makers, for them to make policies that would aid the people towards achieving good health. This study focused on the print media (newspapers) while the current study focused on the social media (Facebook).

To ascertain the knowledge of Lassa fever disease and its preventive measures among secondary school teachers in Enugu East Local Government Area, Enemuo and Obayi (2021) adopted the descriptive research design and administered 225 questionnaires to 225 teachers in public secondary schools in the area who were selected using multi-stage sampling procedure and simple random sampling technique of balloting without replacement. Frequency tables and simple percentages were used to analyze the findings of this study while chi-square statistics were used to test the null hypotheses of this study. From this study, it was found, among others, that the secondary school teachers possessed low knowledge of Lassa fever disease and average knowledge of Lassa fever preventive measures. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended, among others, that Nigeria's Minister of Education in collaboration with the Minister of Health should organize seminars and workshops in school halls and town halls to enlighten the teachers on Lassa fever's mode of transmission and its preventive measures. This study specifically focused on teachers while the current study did not specifically focus on teachers.

In a study of newspaper coverage of Lassa fever in two Nigerian newspapers, finally, Okeya (2019) adopted the content analysis research design and purposively selected 92 editions each of the Punch and Vanguard newspapers between October and December, 2018, as the sample of the study. From this study, it was found, among others, that both newspapers did not attach enough importance to the coverage of the Lassa fever during the period that was studied. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended, among others, that the media should enlighten the public about ways to prevent Lassa fever in the country. Content analysis research design was used in conducting the study while descriptive survey research design was used in conducting the current study.

Literature Gap

The past researchers whose empirical works were reviewed above, only focused on the health risk practices associated with the reoccurrence of Lassa fever, the knowledge, attitude and prevention of Lassa fever, the role of newspapers in the reportage of Lassa fever issue and newspaper coverage of Lassa fever. While their studies have their differences, they all agreed that Lassa fever is a disease that should be avoided through the sensitization of people and media campaigns. However, they did not specifically focus on the exposure and attitude of Awka South residents towards One Health and Development Initiative's campaign on the prevention of Lassa fever. This represents, in the opinion of the researcher, a knowledge gap which the current study filled.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The source credibility theory was propounded by Hovland, Janis and Kelly (1953). The theory holds that the perceived credibility of the originator determines how the receiver will react to the message. This implies that the attitude that the audiences display when they receive a message to a great extent is dependent on how they see the source; how and what they perceive the source to be. According to Hovland *et al.*, (1953), the believability of a source rests on two primary perceptions: trustworthiness and expertise of the information source. Since "the attitude that the audiences display when they receive a message to a great extent is dependent on how they see the source; how and what they perceive the source to be", the attitude of Awka South residents towards One Health and Development Initiative's Facebook campaign on the prevention of Lassa fever could be dependent on how they see the campaigner (source: One Health and Development Initiative); how and what they perceive the campaigner (source: One Health and Development Initiative) to be (trustworthy or untrustworthy and experts or non-experts).

METHODOLOGY

The researcher adopted the descriptive survey research design for this study. Using the 2024 projected population of Awka South residents which is 298, 895 and the Taro Yamane formula which is $N/1 + N(e)^2$, the researcher determined the samples (399) that were studied and randomly selected 3 communities (Amawbia, Awka and Okpuno) from Awka South where she randomly selected 133 residents of Amawbia, 133 residents of Awka and 133 residents of Okpuno. The researcher administered structured and pre-tested copies of questionnaire to them and analyzed the findings of this study using frequency tables and simple percentages.

FINDINGS

Response Rate

The researcher administered 399 copies of questionnaire to the respondents but not all them were recovered as shown in the table below.

Table 1: Response Rate

	Frequency	Percentage
Recovered	393	98
Not recovered	6	2
Total	399	100

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

Table 1 shows the response rate of the respondents. It shows that out of the 399 questionnaires that were administered to the respondents, the researcher only recovered 98% of them and did not recover the remaining 2%.

Demographic Data of the Respondents

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
18-24	54	14
25-34	166	42
35-44	151	38
45 and above	22	6
Total	393	100
Gender		
Male	193	49
Female	200	51
Total	393	100
Marital Status		
Single	225	57
Married	159	40
Separated	7	2
Widowed	2	1
Total	393	100
Occupation		
Student	78	20
Trader	133	34
Civil servant	145	37
Artisan	13	3
Others	17	4
Unemployed	7	2
Total	393	100

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

Table 2 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents. It shows that out of the 393 respondents that were studied, 14% of them are between the ages of 18 and 24, 42% of them are between 25 and 34, 38% of them are between 35 and 44 while the remaining 6% of the respondents are 45 years and above. The table also shows that out of the 393 respondents that were studied, 49% of them are male while the remaining

51% are female. 57% of the respondents are single, 40% are married, 2% are not with their spouses while the remaining 1% of the respondents are widows. Out of the 393 respondents that were studied, 20% of them are students, 34% of them are traders, 37% are civil servants, 3% are artisans, 4% of them have other occupations while the remaining 2% of the respondents are unemployed.

Analysis of Data from the Research Questions

Research Question 1: What is Awka South residents’ level of exposure to One Health and Development Initiative’s (OHDI) Facebook campaign on the prevention of Lassa fever?

Table 3: Awka South residents’ response as to whether or not they are exposed to One Health and Development Initiative’s (OHDI) Facebook campaign on the prevention of Lassa fever

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	385	98
No	8	2
Total	393	100

Source: Researcher’s Field Survey, 2024

Table 3 shows the response of the respondents as to whether or not they are exposed to One Health and Development Initiative’s (OHDI) Facebook campaign on the prevention of Lassa fever. It shows that out of the 393 respondents that were studied, 98% of them are exposed to the campaign while the remaining 2% of the respondents are not exposed to the campaign. Based on this finding, the respondents are exposed to the Facebook campaign.

Table 4: Awka South residents’ level of exposure to One Health and Development Initiative’s (OHDI) Facebook campaign on the prevention of Lassa fever

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	63	16
High	322	82
Low	8	2
Very low	0	0
Total	393	100

Source: Researcher’s Field Survey, 2024

Table 4 shows the respondents’ level of exposure to One Health and Development Initiative’s (OHDI) Facebook campaign on the prevention of Lassa fever. It shows that out of the 393 respondents that were studied, 16% of the respondents’ level of exposure to the campaign is very high, that of 82% of the respondents is high while that of the remaining 2% is low. This finding, therefore, shows that the respondents are highly exposed to the Facebook campaign.

Research Question 2: What is Awka South residents’ attitude towards One Health and Development Initiative’s (OHDI) Facebook campaign on the prevention of Lassa fever

Table 5: Awka South residents’ attitude towards One Health and Development Initiative’s (OHDI) Facebook campaign on the prevention of Lassa fever

Items	Frequency	Percentage
The Facebook campaign is educative	64	16
It can help to stop the spread of Lassa fever	85	22
It promotes healthy living	204	52
It is difficult to understand	32	8
It cannot help to stop the spread of Lassa fever	8	2
It is misleading	0	0
Total	393	100

Source: Researcher’s Field Survey, 2024

Table 5 shows the respondents’ attitude towards One Health and Development Initiative’s (OHDI) Facebook campaign on the prevention of Lassa fever. It shows that out of the 393 respondents that were studied, 16% of them believe that the campaign is educative while 22% of the respondents believe that it can help to stop the spread of Lassa fever. Another 52% of the respondents out of the 393 respondents that were studied, believe that the campaign promotes healthy living while 8% of the respondents believe that the campaign is difficult to understand. The remaining 2% of the respondents, however, believe that the campaign cannot help to stop the spread of Lassa fever while none of the respondents believe that the campaign is misleading. This finding, therefore, shows that the respondents believe that the campaign promotes healthy living.

Table 6: The dominant factors that informed Awka South residents’ attitude towards One Health and Development Initiative’s (OHDI) Facebook campaign on the prevention of Lassa fever

Items	Frequency	Percentage
My level of education	162	41
My trust in the campaigner (OHDI)	207	53
My basic knowledge of Lassa fever	16	4
The views of people about the campaign	2	1
My religious beliefs	6	2
Total	393	100

Source: Researcher’s Field Survey, 2024

Table 6 shows the dominant factors that informed Awka South residents’ attitude towards One Health and Development Initiative’s (OHDI) Facebook campaign on the prevention of Lassa fever. It shows that out of the 393 respondents that were studied, the attitude of 41% of the respondents towards the campaign was informed by their level of education while the attitude of 53% of the respondents was informed by their trust in One Health and Development Initiative (OHDI). The attitude of 4% of the respondents out of the 393 respondents that were studied, was informed by their basic knowledge of Lassa fever while the attitude of 1% of the respondents was informed by the views of people about the campaign. For the remaining 2% of the respondents, their religious beliefs informed their attitude towards the campaign. This finding clearly shows that the dominant factors that informed the respondents’ attitude are their trust in One Health and Development Initiative (OHDI) and their level of education.

Research Question 3: To what extent do Awka South residents put the measures of One Health and Development Initiative’s (OHDI) Facebook campaign on the prevention of Lassa fever into practice?

Table 7: Awka South residents’ response as to whether or not they put the measures of One Health and Development Initiative’s (OHDI) Facebook campaign on the prevention of Lassa fever into practice

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	386	98
No	7	2
Total	393	100

Source: Researcher’s Field Survey, 2024

Table 7 shows the response of the respondents as to whether or not they put the measures of One Health and Development Initiative’s Facebook campaign on the prevention of Lassa fever into practice. It shows that out of the 393 respondents that were studied, 98% of them put the measures of the campaign into practice while the remaining 2% do not put the measures into practice. This finding, therefore, shows that the respondents put the measures of One Health and Development Initiative’s (OHDI) Facebook campaign into practice.

Table 8: The extent to which Awka South residents put the measures of One Health and Development Initiative’s (OHDI) Facebook campaign on the prevention of Lassa fever into practice

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	51	13
High	335	85
Low	0	0
Very low	7	2
Total	393	100

Source: Researcher’s Field Survey, 2024

Table 8 shows the extent to which the respondents put the measures of One Health and Development Initiative’s (OHDI) Facebook campaign on the prevention of Lassa fever into practice. It shows that out of the 393 respondents that were studied, the extent to which 13% of the respondents put the measures of the campaign into practice is very high while the extent to which 85% of the respondents put the measures of the campaign into practice is high. The table equally shows that the extent to which the remaining 2% of the respondents put the measures of the campaign into practice is very low while none of the respondents indicated that theirs is low. This finding, therefore, shows that the respondents highly put the measures of the Facebook campaign into practice.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

From this study, a number of findings were made. One of them is that Awka South residents are highly exposed to One Health and Development Initiative’s (OHDI) Facebook campaign on the prevention of Lassa fever. This is an indication that the campaign did not fail in the area of reaching Facebook users in Awka South and that the use of Facebook for the campaign paid off. This gives credence to the position of Duru (2023, p. 395) who stated that “with the number of people who visit Facebook, there is no doubt that when advertising messages are placed (on the platform), they would be seen by a wide range of people.” This singular act of using Facebook has also saved OHDI the money that would have been wasted in always traveling to Awka South for physical campaigns which can now be allocated to other health initiatives of the organization. Without Facebook, there would have been need to always travel to Awka South which would cost OHDI more money than it caused it to use Facebook for the campaign.

Another finding which the researcher made from this study, is that the attitude of Awka South residents towards the campaign is that of their belief that the campaign promotes healthy living while the dominant factors that informed this attitude of theirs, are their trust in OHDI and their level of education. Their trust in the OHDI is in agreement with the source credibility theory which states that the attitude that the audiences display when they receive a message to a great extent, is dependent on how they see the source; how and what they perceive the source to be. Based on this, it is clear that Awka South residents reacted the way they did to the campaign because of how they see OHDI (source of the campaign) and what they perceive the source (OHDI) to be. The fact that Awka South residents’ level of education is another factor that informed their attitude towards the campaign, shows the importance and benefit of qualitative education in the health

of the residents. This is why Anambra State Government should double its efforts to promote and ensure qualitative health education for all qualitative health education seekers in the State by qualitatively improving the health education of primary, secondary and adult education schools and recruiting highly qualified teachers that will always impact factual health knowledge in students and other qualitative health education seekers in Anambra State.

Finally, the researcher found that Awka South residents highly put the measures of OHDI Facebook campaign on the prevention of Lassa fever into practice. The campaign must have played a part in this and that is why Eluke and Mbazie (2022) is of the view that mass media campaigns are aimed primarily to change knowledge, awareness and attitudes, contributing to the goal of changing behaviour. Since Awka South residents trust OHDI (the source of the campaign that was studied), it means that the campaign was created in such a way that convinced the residents to highly put the measures into practice and in a way that did not make them question the expertise of OHDI. Considering that people mostly do what they are asked to do by those they trust, it leaves nothing in doubt as to why the residents opted to highly put the measures of the campaign into practice.

CONCLUSION

Many years ago, the first case of Lassa fever was recorded in Nigeria. Ever since then, the disease has continued to resurface on a yearly basis with almost all the States in Nigeria recording differing number of cases and deaths. This year is no different. However, the spread of this disease can be controlled and reduced to the barest minimum, if not totally, if Awka residents and other Anambra residents always expose themselves to factual media campaigns, including One Health and Development Initiative's (OHDI) Facebook campaign on the prevention of and comply with them even in this age and time when misleading campaigns are out there in different media platforms.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher recommends that:

1. Awka South residents should always expose themselves to OHDI's Facebook campaign on the prevention of Lassa fever. This is to always remember what they should do to avoid contacting and spreading the disease.
2. Awka South residents' should encourage OHDI to always embark on trustworthy and factual campaigns by using its Facebook campaign on the prevention of Lassa fever to counter deceitful and misleading health information campaigns on Lassa fever prevention.
3. Beyond countering deceitful information with OHDI's Facebook campaign on the prevention of Lassa fever, Awka South residents should continue and never relent in putting the measures of the campaign into practice. This is because doing this, is what will make them sound more credible when they are promoting the campaign on Facebook and off the social media platform.

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