



GHANA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

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Our Ref:

Date: 1st March, 2023

Your Ref:

To All Members,

STATEMENT ON DETECTION OF LASSA FEVER IN GHANA

The Ghana Medical Association (GMA) has taken notice of the recent detection of Lassa Fever cases in Ghana from 24th February 2023 as announced by the Ghana Health Service. The total number of confirmed cases so far is 14 including some doctors and other health workers exposed in their line of duty.

The GMA also acknowledges measures being put in place to trace their contacts and contain the virus from spreading further. The Association is facilitating the provision of psychological support to the colleagues confirmed with the disease.

The virus spreads to humans through contact with food or household items contaminated with the urine or faeces of mice. It also spreads from one person to the other through direct contact with bodily fluids e.g. urine, blood, faeces or contaminated clothes and beddings of an infected person.

This risk of spread among health professionals is high when infection prevention and control (IPC) protocols are not adhered to during the care of patients.

SYMPTOMS OF LASSA FEVER

Most people infected with the virus may present with mild symptoms or may be asymptomatic.

The early symptoms of Lassa fever are non-specific and usually includes fever, general malaise, weakness, and headache.

Other symptoms may include sore throat, muscle pain, chest pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, cough, and abdominal pain.

Severe cases may present with bleeding from the mouth, nose, vagina or stomach.

TREATMENT

While no vaccine currently offers protection against Lassa Fever, Ribavirin offers good outcomes especially when given early along with other supportive management.

The GMA is engaging the government to fast-track the mobilization of the drug to ensure its availability for the management of patients

ADHERENCE TO IPC PROTOCOLS

Members are advised to adhere strictly to IPC protocols especially regarding the use of PPEs at all times and ensure all other members of the care team do same. In particular,

Wearing of facemasks at all times at work, frequent hand washing or use of hand sanitizers, use of gloves and avoidance of contact with bodily fluids.

Members are also urged to have a high index of suspicion for individuals presenting with the signs and symptoms outlined above.

The GMA will continue to monitor the situation and advise members accordingly.



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Dr. Frank Serebour
President



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Dr. Richard Selormey
Ag. General Secretary