

# Unpredicted Barriers to Prevention and Elimination of Viral Hepatitis in Remote Communities in Nigeria: Implications for National and Global Health Interventions

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## BACKGROUND

- Nigeria has population of >180 million
- Hep B prevalence >13.9% and anti-HCV prevalence of 2.1%
- >20 million persons currently infected with hepatitis B.
- >2.5 million persons with HCV



## METHODS

- Two remote communities in Nigeria lacking basic social and medical amenities
- Information obtained rated based on common occurrences in relation to transmission and prevention of viral hepatitis
- Barriers evaluated on severity scale of 1-10

Survey Questions  
 Have you heard of viral hepatitis before?  
 Where is your hospital or clinic?  
 How often do you go there?  
 How do you pay for your bills?  
  
 To mothers, did you vaccinate your children, where and when?  
  
 What drugs do you take for treatment? How do you buy it?  
 How many of you sleep in a room ?

## RESULTS

- Limited knowledge about viral hepatitis ranked highest
- Low vaccination coverage affecting prevention adversely
- Risky Cultural practices e.g. scarification, traditional birth etc.
- Myths about viral hepatitis e.g. jaundice as “witch eye”, ascites as “reward for evil”
- Lack of medical facilities and access to care
- Poor housing conditions e.g. congestion
- Internally - displaced persons in over-crowded camps
- Inadequacy of trained health workers
- communal clashes and conflicts

- Recommendations
- Need for increased awareness in rural areas about viral hepatitis
  - Screening of all population and increased access to medical care
  - Training of rural dwellers on best practices to avoid transmission
  - Advocacy and support for research to estimate disease burden

## CONCLUSIONS

- There is urgent need to improve quality of life, determine disease burden, scale up screening and access to medical care in remote communities, in order to ensure equity in delivering hepatitis services.

## REFERENCES

Musa B, Bussell S, Borodo M M, Samaila A A, Femi O L. Prevalence of hepatitis B virus infection in Nigeria, 2000-2013: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Niger J Clin Pract* 2015;18:163-72

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest

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