



Title: Utilizing local solutions through active community engagement to strengthen Lassa fever prevention and control in Ondo state, Nigeria, July 2024

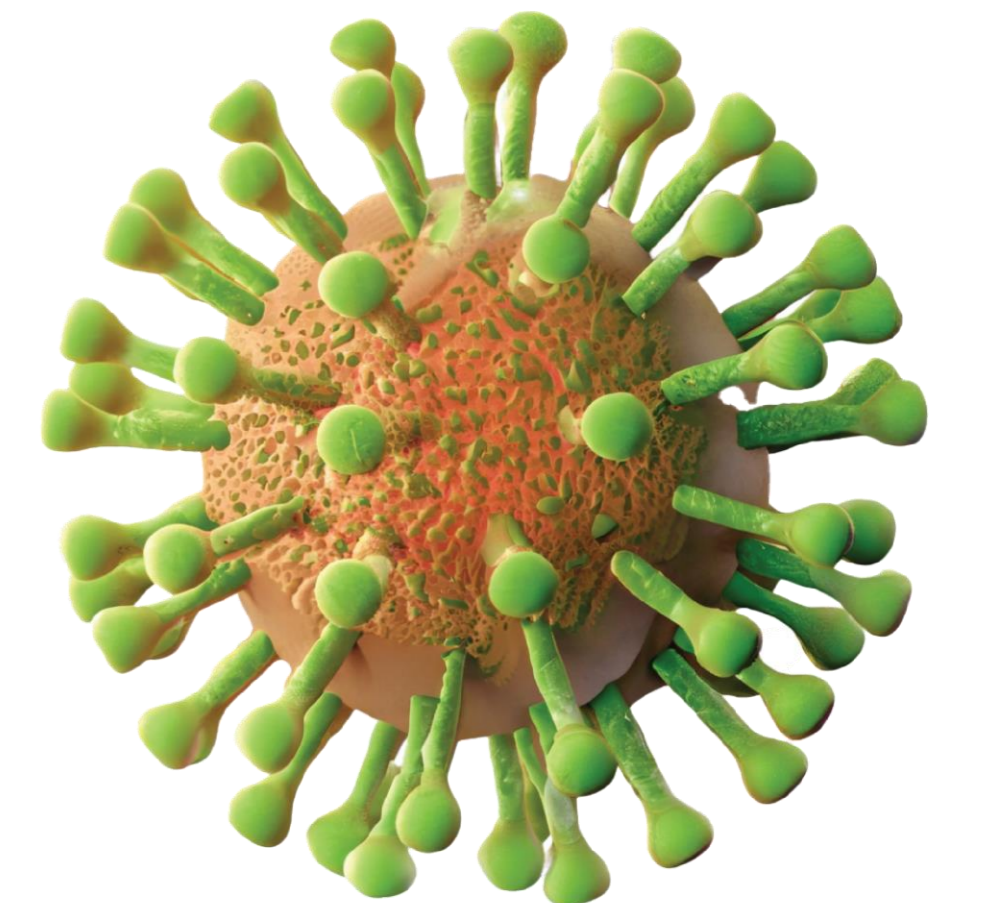


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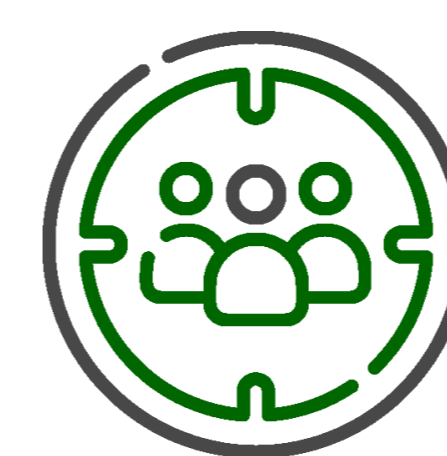
Background

- **Lassa fever (LF)** is endemic in Ondo state, Nigeria with yearly outbreaks reported.
- A novel approach called **Local Innovations Scaled through Enterprise Networks (LISTEN)** was piloted to optimize control efforts
 - 2 high-burden Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Ondo State.
- **LISTEN** is a co-creation strategy utilizing human centered design to identify challenges and solutions that are data-driven through continuous data review and leveraging **Communities of Practice (CoP)** for implementation and sustainability.



Methods

Data were collected using semi-structured questionnaires, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions with **71 respondents** (politicians, community leaders, and healthcare workers) in Akure-South and Owo LGAs. Manual thematic analysis highlighted challenges in healthcare access, environmental conditions, and social behaviors. Data was securely archived on a shared drive, accessible only to the project team.



71

Respondents



Results

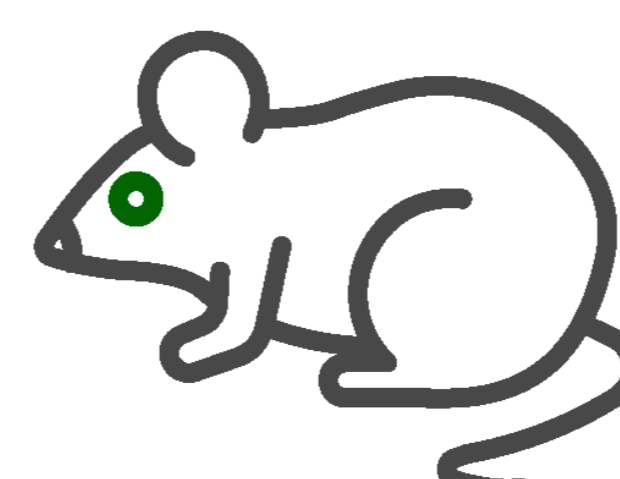
Insights reveal poor healthcare access due to distant testing centers and high transport costs, misconceptions and traditional beliefs delaying care, and unsafe food storage practices. Environmental factors such as unkempt bushes, open refuse dumps, and poor hygiene in markets and homes drive rat infestations and disease spread. Additionally, social stigma against Lassa fever survivors further complicates disease management.



Poor Road Network to Health Facility



Poor Housing Condition



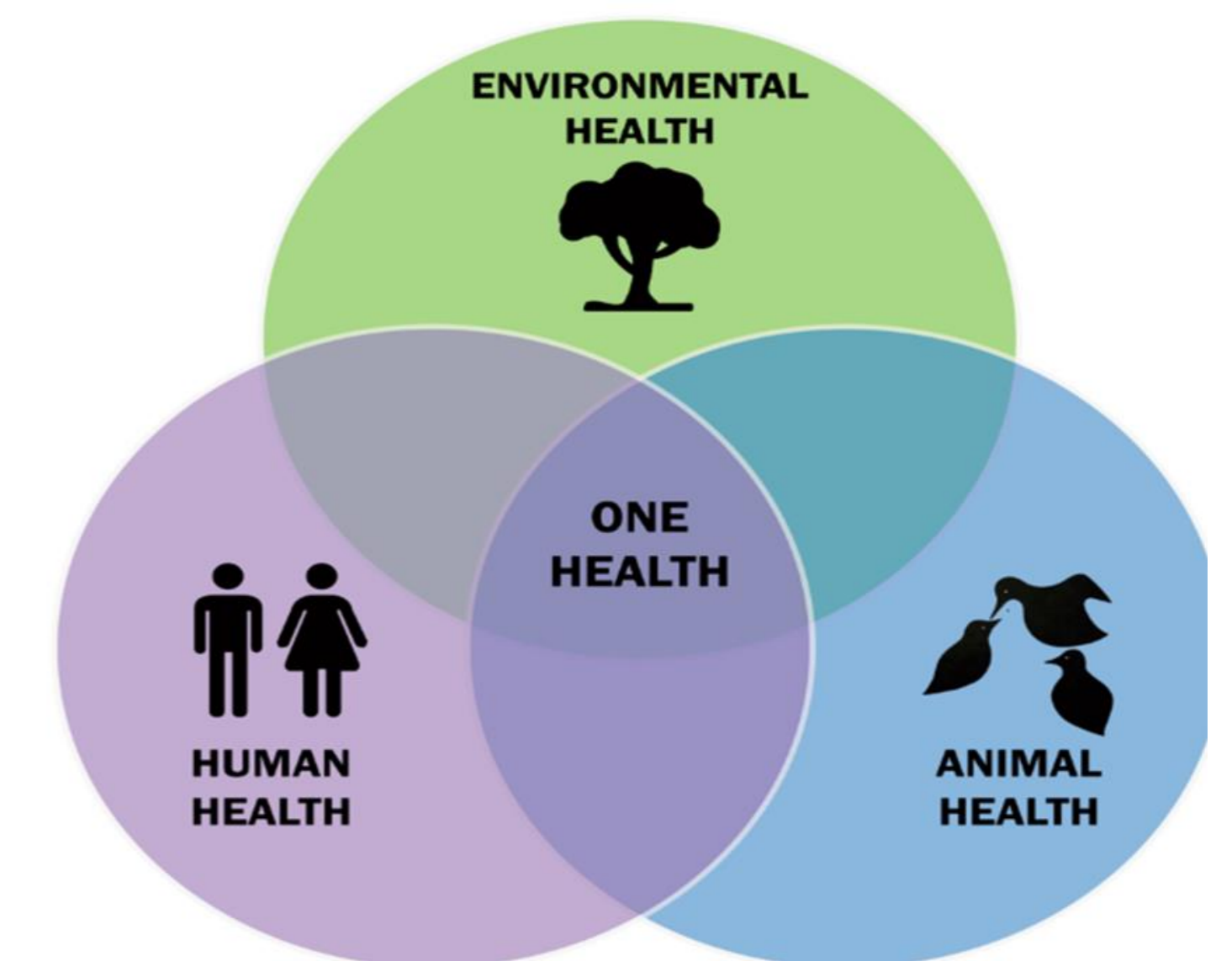
Rodent Infestation



Awareness & Education

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study demonstrated that community engagement and collaborative public health efforts are critical to controlling LF outbreaks. Immediate actions include improved waste management, raising awareness to reduce stigma, and promoting good food hygiene to prevent future outbreaks in Ondo State. These insights provide a roadmap for leveraging local LF control resources and expand efforts to other endemic regions.



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