

The coronavirus pandemic currently shocking the world gained entry into Nigeria with its first case confirmed on the 27th of February, 2020 in Lagos state. The discovery spiralled into a frenzy of misinformation as the NCDC and Federal Ministry of Health worked to allay citizens' fears and contain the outbreak. It is important that we all play a role in beating the virus by sharing only validated information and promoting effective preventive measures.

The Coronavirus CivActs Campaign (CCC) gathers rumours, concerns and questions from communities across Nigeria to eliminate information gaps between the government, media, NGOs and citizens. By providing the public with facts, the CCC ensures a better understanding of needs regarding the coronavirus and debunks rumours before they can do more harm. Information sharing will be critical to defeating the virus, due to the diverse cultural backgrounds and drawbacks in national education.

Coronavirus poses a serious threat to Nigeria's population of over 180 million people given the country's weak healthcare system, high level of poverty, crowded living conditions and deep-set corruption in government. Economic and insecurity conditions in Nigeria were already tenuous before this outbreak, and Nigeria already fares badly against any health indicators, with high mortality rates and poor life expectancy. When and if coronavirus hits the highly populated communities of Nigeria's cities, it could be a disaster.

It is absolutely critical that Nigeria deals with this pandemic in forward-thinking, open, transparent ways to ensure the well-being of citizens, build resilience and rapidly curb the potential for social conflict. In Nigeria, this is a huge challenge but also a real opportunity to reimagine public health systems, redefine the relationship between citizens and those in power, and reinvigorate governance.

Update on potential Treatments for COVID-19

Scientists and healthcare professionals have been working together to find a suitable treatment to the COVID-19 pandemic. So far it has been established through several studies that the use of facemasks and social distancing is effective in reducing the spread of this virus and the Nigerian government has mandated the use of these methods in our daily interactions. On the treatment side, the NCDC has advised for supportive management of confirmed cases, which includes management of symptoms, management of pre-existing conditions, supplemental oxygen therapy, treatment of bacterial infection and ensuring patients are well nourished and hydrated.

The anti-malarial drug chloroquine had initially been widely used as a potential treatment for the virus in many countries. However, clinical studies have confirmed that the drug is ineffective in treating the virus, especially a recovery trial run by Oxford University which involved 11,000 patients. Based on these tests, the FDA has

revoked the emergency use authorization for chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine. The WHO also temporarily suspended the solidarity trial on hydroxychloroquine treatment in May, resuming studies on the effectiveness of the drug on the 3rd of June. Medical journals also retracted promotions of the drug as a treatment for the virus.

The WHO recently approved the use of and called for the increased production of the steroidal drug Dexamethasone for its “life-saving potential for critically ill COVID-19 patients.” This was based on a clinical trial in the UK which was shown to reduce deaths by one third; and one fifth for patients requiring oxygen. The body also acknowledged that the data was still preliminary, but sufficient to be put into use. However, the WHO has specified that this drug should only be used on severely ill patients under close clinical supervision. There is no evidence that this drug could work on mild cases of the coronavirus and it could cause harm if used as a preventive drug.

Finally, Nigerian Universities’ Scientists, under the aegis of COVID-19 Research Group announced the discovery of a vaccine for the prevention of the coronavirus pandemic. Dr Oladipo Kolawole, who led the team, disclosed that the unnamed vaccine would be unveiled to the public only after 18 months, due to the bulk of analysis and medical studies that would need to be done, as well as approvals by medical authorities.

Update on potential Treatments for COVID-19

According to the CDC, it appears that the novel coronavirus can spread from people to animals in some situations, especially after close contact with a person sick with the virus. This information is of particular value to pet owners and those that are in the meat processing industry and frequent animal food markets.

The coronavirus had initially been believed by scientists to have started spreading to humans from bats or pangolins in a wet market in Wuhan, China from which it has reached the corners of the world. It has also been determined that cats and dogs can be infected with the virus, but it is not yet known all the animals that can get infected. Here is a list of official COVID-19 discoveries in animals worldwide so far:

- A small number of cats and dogs have been reported to be infected with the virus in several countries, including the United States of America.

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RUMOURS



People are meant to wear masks while exercising to prevent COVID-19

Thermal scanners can detect if a person has COVID-19 or not.

People are being paid to stay in isolation centres

Catching COVID-19 means you will have it for life

COVID-19 numbers are being inflated

VS



FACTS

It is not advisable to wear masks while exercising as they may reduce the ability to breathe comfortably. Also sweat can make the mask become wet quickly making it difficult to breathe and promoting the growth of germs. The important preventive measure during exercise is to maintain physical distance of at least one meter from others.

The thermal scanner is designed to detect people who have a higher body temperature than normal; however, it cannot detect if a person is infected with COVID-19 as there are many causes of fever. It is advised to call a healthcare provider if suffering from a fever.

There is no evidence of healthy or sick people receiving payment to stay in isolation centres. Patients are given food, drinks and medicines as part of their treatment. Testing is voluntary and only patients who test positive are admitted into the centres for treatment.

Most of the people who catch COVID-19 can recover and eliminate the virus from their bodies. If you are showing symptoms of the illness - such as cough, fever and difficulty breathing - seek medical care early by calling a healthcare provider.

The NCDC posts updates of their tests and results daily online and the majority of tests conducted have turned out negative. COVID-19 numbers are dependent on the number of people willing to come forward for testing if they develop symptoms. Also, the chairman of the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19 has stated that 80 per cent of positive cases are not in isolation centres.

Most of these pets became sick after contact with people with COVID-19.

- Several lions and tigers tested positive for COVID-19 at a New York zoo after showing signs of respiratory illness. Public health officials believe these large cats became sick after being exposed to a zoo employee who had been infected. All of these cats have recovered.
- COVID-19 infection has also been detected in many farms in the Netherlands in animals called Mink. The mink showed respiratory and gastrointestinal signs and the farms also experienced an increase in mink deaths. It is believed that infected farm workers were the source of their infections.
- Recent research has showed that ferrets, cats and golden Syrian hamsters can be experimentally infected with COVID-19 and can spread the virus to animals of the same species in the laboratory.
- Studies have showed that Rhesus macaques, cynomolgus macaques, African green monkeys and common marmosets are other primates that can become infected with the coronavirus in the Laboratory.
- Data from one study suggests that dogs can get infected but might not be able to spread the virus to other dogs as easily if compared to cats and ferrets.

Recently, Chinese provinces have increased inspections of fresh meat, frozen meat and sea food after a new outbreak of coronavirus infections linked to a food market in Beijing called Xinfadi, which is the largest in Asia. The inspections began after the virus was detected on a chopping board used to handle salmon.

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE IN NIGERIA AT AS TODAY - 11/07/2020

31,323

CONFIRMED CASES

709

DEATHS

12,795

RECOVERED

178,265

TESTED

Coronavirus CivActs Campaign na information wey we bring from Accountability Lab Nigeria.

