

Nigeria needs \$1.1bn for meningitis vaccine programme

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The sum of \$1.1bn is currently required to vaccinate 22m people in the five Nigerian states affected by the outbreak of the type C cerebro-spinal meningitis.

The five states are Zamfara, Sokoto, Kebbi, Katsina and Niger, while 16 other states have recorded at least one case each of the disease.

The acting director general of the NPHCDA, Dr Emmanuel Odu, said each vaccine costs between \$30 and \$50. He added that the vaccine is expensive and scarce.

The widespread outbreak might have been averted if relevant agencies had commenced campaigns to raise awareness on preventive measures when it first started in December 2016.



Source: World Health Organisation

Also briefing the committee, the CEO/national coordinator of the NCDC, Dr Chikwe Ihekweazu, said the Type C strain of the disease is new to West Africa, hence the seeming unpreparedness to tackle it.

The vaccination would commence on Wednesday, following the procurement of the vaccines from the World Health Organisation (WHO), he said, adding that the vaccine was only procured two weeks ago as the criterion for application is

that the country must be experiencing an outbreak.

He added that the centre, working in collaboration with the state governments, ministry of health, and the National Primary Healthcare Commission, has adopted a motion three-pronged line of action for prevention, early detection and pushing hard to ensure the vaccines are available.

Ihekweazu added that while available treatments work when the disease is detected early, most victims arrive at the hospital late for various reasons. The centre has however enlisted community and traditional rulers to help persuade their people to go to the hospital immediately they feel ill.

While the centre has sent support teams to Zamfara and other affected states for rapid response, alongside the establishment of treatment centres, not much has been done with the 16 states that are not fully affected, he admitted.

Source: allAfrica

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