



# Educating health workers about meningitis in Nigeria

Care and Development Centre (CADEC) delivered specialised training to 30 health workers for World Meningitis Day 2024. This was achieved in collaboration with three state-level health ministries. The project, entitled *Pro-Active and Rapid Response in Preventing Meningitis Outbreaks*, was funded by the CoMO World Meningitis Day 2024 Advocacy Fund pilot.

## Organisation

Care and Development Centre (CADEC)

## Background

Non-governmental organisation with a range of programmes for vulnerable people, in fields including health education

## Location

Rivers State, Nigeria

## Planning and target audience

CADEC identified Community Health Extension Workers (CHEWs) as a key audience for meningitis training. CHEWs are widely documented

as playing an important role in passing on life-saving knowledge to vulnerable populations.

CADEC have often worked with the Rivers State Ministry of Health. However, the project funding enabled them to also involve the

ministries of two neighbouring states, Abia and Bayelsa. At the ministries' request, Health Surveillance Officers (HSOs) were also invited to participate. In total, 22 CHEWs and eight HSOs, from all three states, benefited from the training.

## Themes and content

The training was held on 2nd and 3rd October and covered:

- Types, causes and epidemiology of meningitis.
- Signs and symptoms and how to diagnose it accurately.
- The burden of the disease within Nigeria.
- Issues of underreporting and underdiagnosis within the health system.
- Risks of patients not seeking medical help promptly.
- The World Health Organization's [Global Road Map to Defeat Meningitis by 2030](#) and its relevance to Nigeria.
- The role of community-level health communication in preventing the disease, alongside vaccination.

The CHEWs also split into groups to discuss the main obstacles to accurate reporting in their states. They then presented these to the full group.

Trainees heard the personal stories of two mothers whose children

were affected by the disease, including one mother who attended in person. Hearing real-life stories brought to life the theory trainees had learned.

All trainees received printed literature for future reference and informational materials to distribute to their local communities.

## Additional activities

CADEC also organised a range of awareness-raising activities as part of the project:

- Outreach at a market, both orally and with printed flyers, targeting traders.
- A radio talk show on Radio Nigeria Treasure FM, featuring a doctor and the mother of a meningitis survivor.
- A discussion of life-saving awareness about meningitis on Facebook Live, conducted in Nigerian Pidgin English.
- Official online broadcasts about meningitis from the Permanent Health Secretaries of Abia and Bayelsa States.



- CHEWs and families posed with candles on World Meningitis Day, in solidarity with everyone affected by meningitis. CADEC then shared these photos on their social media pages.

## Outcomes

The training recipients all came away with the knowledge and confidence needed to identify the early signs of meningitis and report suspected cases. This will make them invaluable assets in preventing future meningitis outbreaks and mitigating the after-effects of meningitis in their communities.

Key meningitis messages also reached a variety of audiences across three states of southern Nigeria.

### Further resources

 [CADEC Facebook page](#)

### Contacts

Meningitis Research Foundation:

 [meningitis.org](http://meningitis.org)

Confederation of Meningitis Organisations:

 [como@meningitis.org](mailto:como@meningitis.org)

 [comomeningitis.org](http://comomeningitis.org)

**The CoMO Advocacy Fund allowed us to demonstrate a model for effective health worker training. Better-trained health workers will help avert the possibility of meningitis outbreaks in their states. We have shown stakeholders the importance of this, and we hope the training will be replicated across Nigeria.**

Omorodion Rhoda Omoile, CADEC Executive Director

