

NCDS AND COVID-19 IN NIGERIA

What is the current COVID-19 situation in your country?

- As of 28th May, the total number of confirmed cases was 8915 with 2592 discharged and 259 deaths
- So far all the states including the FCT have been affected except Kwara and Cross River.
- A multi-sectoral national emergency operations centre (EOC), activated at Level 3 and headed by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, continues to coordinate the national response activities.
- 70% of the fatalities were due to NCDs (majorly hypertension and diabetes).

How has COVID-19 affected your work on the NCD response?

- For over two months all NCD interventions were put on hold due to Covid-19.
- Already planned work such as HCW trainings, protocol and guideline development meetings scheduled with stakeholders were all stalled.

Do you know about any interruptions in NCD services?

- Yes, the Covid19 pandemic interrupted NCD services in some areas as a lot of attention was initially towards Covid19 containment. Also, access to health care facilities by patients have reduced drastically for fear of infection.

Are NCDs linked to the COVID-19 response?

- Although NCDs was initially not linked to the COVID-19 response, the alarming NCD related COVID-19 mortality rates have changed this situation.
- Now, some members of staff of the NCDs Division have been engaged to support the technical arm of the national task force.
- In collaboration with the NCD Division, WHO and Resolve, the NCDC has developed a recommendation on NCDs messaging during COVID-19.
- These messages are targeted at PLWNCDs, general public and HCWs and will be disseminated via print media, jingles, text messaging, websites, fact sheets, posters and bill boards.
- The NCDD is also holding talks with WAHO and NCDC on how best to provide mental health and psychosocial support to patients and health care workers.

Do you expect things to get better or worse in the coming months?

- I expect things to get much better in the coming months. Granted, we were thrown off balance by the spread of the virus, followed by the lock down protocol that put a stop to all pending activities, however in the past weeks we have come up with alternative strategies on sustaining NCD programming during the pandemic.

What strategies may help sustain NCD programming during the pandemic?

- Virtual trainings of HCWs
- Virtual meetings with stakeholders (This will include the NCD TWG meetings).
- Introducing telemedicine that allows doctors to consult remotely with their patients.