



COVID-19: Important Challenges in Africa in General and in Niger in Particular!

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Editorial

Different epidemics have succeeded one another through time, each with its own share of disaster. COVID-19 broke records in terms of speed of spread, clinical severity, and mortality.

COVID-19 has quickly become a pandemic and has overtaken tuberculosis and HIV in terms of infectiousness. While in China and in the rest of the world major efforts are being made to contain this terrible pandemic, in Africa we are unfortunately witnessing the disbelief of health workers in particular and the rest of the population in general.

And this doubt was due to the fact that the predictions of international organizations for Africa on the pandemic did not come true. It was predicted that given the failure of our health system, it would be difficult for us to overcome this pandemic. To everyone's surprise, Africa has had less damage from COVID-19 than the rest of the world. It is clear that this thesis must be taken with great caution for several reasons, including:

- Not all deaths pass through the health center, so it is clear that many unexplained deaths maybe due to COVID-19.
- Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) is not available in all health centers, which means that even if you think about these types of diagnoses, it will be difficult to make them with certainty.
- COVID-19 has been found to coexist with several comorbidities. The similarity of the clinical signs of COVID-19 and pulmonary tuberculosis, for example, can lead to a misdiagnosis of either disease. In other words, several cases of death due to tuberculosis could actually be attributable to COVID-19.

It is therefore imperative for the African continent to wake up and face this disease that affects all of humanity. There is a fear of a third wave of COVID-19. The COVID-19 vaccine exists, and several studies attest to its safety. However, it is still faced with reluctance on all sides. The sites reserved for vaccination are not very popular.

- To eradicate COVID-19, it is important to take consistent measures:
- A vast awareness campaign must be conducted to make the population aware of the real danger posed by COVID-19.
- Take advantage of the various religious leaders, given their influence, to sensitize the population and bring them to believe in the reality of COVID-19 but also to adhere to the various mass vaccination campaigns.
- Use the different forms of media wisely to distill necessary and soothing information, avoid creating a general psychosis, as was the case at the beginning of the pandemic.
- The government must scrupulously ensure strict compliance with barrier measures (social distancing, wearing masks, washing hands with hydro-alcoholic solutions, avoiding promiscuity, etc.).
- In existing health centers, set up a special area at the referral level to receive suspected patients.
- Create health centers in all regional capitals specifically dedicated to the management of COVID-19 cases, and equip these centers with human resources and investigation means.
- Train and educate health workers in the management of this disease.

Finally, we must begin to produce our own COVID-19 vaccines in sufficient quantity and quality according to the needs of our various countries.

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Received Date: 17 Jun 2021

Accepted Date: 07 Jul 2021

Published Date: 09 Jul 2021

Citation:

Kadir IMA. COVID-19: Important
Challenges in Africa in General and in
Niger in Particular!. *Am J Otolaryngol
Head Neck Surg.* 2021; 4(6): 1142.

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