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Prevalence and Predictors of Active COVID-19 Infection in a Rural Community in South-East Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Background: There is a global decline in the incidence of coronavirus disease 19 (COVID-19) infection. The aim of this study was to determine the prevalence and predictors of active COVID-19 infection in a rural community in Enugu state.

Methods: A community-based descriptive cross-sectional study involving 276 consenting adult participants aged 18 years or more in Ama-Etiti community, Oji-River Local Government Area of Enugu state, South-East Nigeria using a convenience sampling technique. All participant data was collected during a medical outreach on 07 October 2022. Nasopharyngeal swab samples were taken from each study participant for SARS-CoV-2 antigen using Rapid Diagnostic Test lateral flow assay.

Results: Majority (70%, n= 193) were females while the mean age was 57.5 ± 19.3 years. More than half (56.5%, n= 156) were married and a low level of literacy was observed as majority of the study participants had either no formal education (33%, n=91) or primary education (30.8%, n=85). Half of the participants lived in 1-2 room apartments as of the period of the data collection. The prevalence of active COVID-19 infection was 3.3% (n= 9). Regarding infection prevention and control practices, 67.4% (n= 186) of participants reported use of facemasks, 89.1% (n= 246) affirmed practicing some form of hand washing, while 35.9% (n= 99) reported that they have used a hand sanitizer. Among those that reported use of facemasks, 70.7% (n= 195) were regular users, while 29.3% (n= 81) used it rarely. Out of 35.9% (n= 99) that affirmed the use of hand sanitizer, 63.6% (n= 176) did so regularly while 36.4% (n= 100) used it rarely. Only 1.1% (n= 3) indicated they had come in contact with a COVID-19 case, 13% (n= 36) reported that they had come in contact with a febrile patient while 39% (n= 108) engaged in alcohol and/or cigarette use. On binary logistic regression, none of the variables was predictive of active COVID-19 infection

Conclusions: Our study revealed a low prevalence of active COVID-19 infection in a rural community in South East Nigeria as of October 7, 2022. The low level of preventive practices reported by the participants highlights the need for a robust community sensitization on basic infection prevention measures.

Key words: COVID-19, SARS-CoV-2, Enugu, Nigeria