

Access to electricity and water in Nigeria: a panacea to slow the spread of Covid-19

Editorial

In view of the ever-growing path of COVID-19, which stands for coronavirus disease 2019, is caused by a virus named SARS-CoV-2 and the speed the coronavirus was spreading undetected in most states in Nigeria exposing human frailty and folly. Our shared humanity is threatened due to a virus that is deadly with no borders and recognizing no division in family of nations. Isolating the sick, social distancing to curb person to person transmission, reducing morbidity and mortality, compulsory isolation, mandatory closure of nonessential workplaces, public institutions and to confine themselves in their homes leading to canceling or postponement of conferences, meetings and bans on large gatherings, institutions across the world are restricting travel and quarantining their contacts through containment measures are activities that are aimed at interrupting transmission. This means identifying cases earlier, isolating cases, and tracing contacts to prevent or limit person to person transmission and encouraging social distancing slow the spread of COVID-19. With countries facing shutdowns like Italy, Spain, China and Nigeria, humanity is facing serious adversity that can either split us apart in fear, or unite us in common purpose and love. Series of movement can help shape what happens next.

It is indispensable that humans are active and socially engaged all through the periods of isolation and social distancing. Use technology! For instance, schedule regular video chat and phone dates with friends and family. A consistent electricity supply underpins all of these services, as well as powering the devices most of us take for granted such as fridges, washing machines, light bulbs, phones and laptops etc. to boost online teaching, smart phone engagement, and peer-to-peer education. Electricity is critical for operating the oxygen, ventilators and other medical equipment in the hospitals treating the soaring numbers of sick people. These services shouldn't be taken for granted as hundreds of millions of individuals live without any access to electricity, making them far more vulnerable to disease and other dangers.

It is imperative to have strong surveillance not only at points of entries such as airports, but also to improve the capabilities and capacities to detect cases in health facilities and communities to combat health emergencies. A rapid, holistic and cohesive response from all arms of government, development partners, civil society and local communities is absolutely critical, aimed at reducing illness and death in the time to come. Personal hygiene, in particular regular hand washing is critical and are being promoted without proper infrastructure to supply water to various homes, social distancing and preparedness also pays off. It is significant to note that community capacity building and engagement is vital in responding effectively to the pandemic outbreak. Communities will have to lead prevention and mitigation interventions on the ground and it should be reiterated,

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however, that many Nigerians are living in poor and overcrowded areas facing significant socioeconomic obstacles to such efforts, so the onus is on all governments and their partners to scale up health services and other critical measures by providing near constant electricity and water supply for its citizenry to help encourage stay at home and public health education based on scientific evidence to reduce the anxiety and distress caused by distorted and misinformation through social media.

In specific, findings from epidemiological study need to be reported in a timely and scientific manner so that they can be precisely assessed and interpreted. Also, Nigerian government should act swiftly and decisively to offer robust support for key domestic public health and health care programs, medical countermeasure development, national preparedness programs and response mechanisms and international collaborations in order to mitigate the virus impacts. Prompt action now is needed to avoid worst case health and economic consequences and in addition government should urgently take additional steps now to prepare domestically to invest globally and to help make the shift from containment of the virus to mitigation of its effects. This shift will be difficult, and the response will be outstandingly resources intensive as readiness and response to health security risks like COVID-19 is as indispensable to the safety and well-being of Nigerians.

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