

Poster Title: Ready or Not: Digital Health Tools for Surveillance in Infectious Diseases' Outbreaks in Liberia, Nigeria & Sierra Leone: A Policy Review.

Abstract

The experience of Ebola and COVID-19 has led many countries to incorporate digital health tools for outbreak response and public health surveillance. Policies are important for guiding use, adoption, resource allocation and sustainability, and this can be particularly challenging for countries in West Africa with socioeconomic and infrastructural challenges. I aimed to examine the readiness of policy documents for digital surveillance tools used for infectious disease outbreaks in Liberia, Nigeria & Sierra Leone. I identified policy documents from online searches and used WHO guidance to design a framework to extract key information, assessing documents against this. Early results show that relative to WHO policy, there are gaps in the structure of in-country policy documents, with limited policy guidance on sustainable financing for components of digital surveillance. This includes tools/infrastructure (hardware, software, network resources) as well as training, pilot testing, and implementation. Identifying ways to strengthen the response to infectious disease outbreaks requires ready and effective policies to ensure optimal outbreak response.