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COVID-19 Pandemic in African Union Member Nations: An Epidemiological Overview

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Background: The major public health problem confronting the world today is COVID-19 pandemic. The case ascertainment and pattern of spread in AU member countries have been challenging. We aimed to assess the distribution patterns of COVID-19 infection and the associated epidemiologic measures across five geographical regions and the 53 AU member countries.

Methods: The COVID-19 infection data used for this assessment was obtained from the Africa CDC website (www.africacdc.org) from January 2020 to January 2021. We conducted a descriptive and inferential analysis of the following variables namely reported cases (RC) of COVID-19 infection, number of deaths, active cases (AC), and recoveries (R). In addition, epidemiologic measures that include MMR, CFR, and case ratios were also assessed.

Results: There were 3,207,637 SARS-CoV-2 RC, out of which, 77,689 died, 512,838 remained AC and 2,617,110 recovered. The mean CFR of AU was 2.2%. The Southern region recorded the highest average RC (149,314), AC (26,156), and deaths (3,941.6), while the Northern region recorded the highest average R (121,372). Conversely, the central region recorded the least average number of RC (4,978), R (4,554), and deaths (191.4). The western region recorded the least average number of AC (2,274). There were significant differences ($p < 0.05$) in the AC/RC ratio, MMRs of COVID-19 infection across the AU geographical regions.

Conclusion: There are significant variations in AC/RC ratio and MMR of COVID-19 infection across the 5 geographical regions of AU. There is a need to scale up emergency response preparedness in most regions of AU to enhance proper intervention.