



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***EPIDEMIOLOGY OF TYPHOID FEVER IN GOMBE METROPOLITAN
AREA OF GOMBE STATE, NIGERIA***

UMAR ABDULLAHI TAWFIQ

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BERILMU BERBAKTI

**EPIDEMIOLOGY OF TYPHOID FEVER IN GOMBE METROPOLITAN AREA
OF GOMBE STATE, NIGERIA**

By

UMAR ABDULLAHI TAWFIQ

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra
Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of
Philosophy**

June 2021

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late mother Hajiya Hauwa'u Jummai El-Nafate Kawuwa, an epitome of knowledge, integrity, love, kindness, justice, and wisdom.



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

EPIDEMIOLOGY OF TYPHOID FEVER IN GOMBE METROPOLITAN AREA OF GOMBE STATE, NIGERIA

By

UMAR ABDULLAHI TAWFIQ

June 2021

Chairman : Associate Professor Shamarina binti Shohaimi, PhD
Faculty : Science

Typhoid fever is a human-restricted acute systemic and life-threatening disease which is caused by ingesting food or water contaminated with *Salmonella typhi*. This disease affects all genders and all ages but is more prevalent in developing countries especially those of Africa and Asia. Invasive *Salmonella* infections are responsible for a significant burden of morbidity and mortality with incidences of between 11 to 21 million infections and 128,000 to 161,000 mortalities globally, with 7.2million cases annually in Africa alone. In Nigeria, proper epidemiological data regarding typhoid fever is scanty and unavailable in most of the States like Gombe where the disease has been occurring for a long time without hinderance. In Gombe, typhoid fever occurrence is believed to be aggravated by absence of epidemiological data for health policy decisions and design of health interventions, lack of constant access to safe drinking water, poor hygiene, and inefficiency of environmental sanitation efforts. Thus, the research questions here include: Is there a significant association between host-associated risk factors and the occurrence/recurrence of typhoid fever in Gombe metropolis? And Is there a significant association between weather conditions and the incidence of typhoid in Gombe metropolis? Hence the aim of the research was the epidemiology of typhoid in Gombe metropolitan area of Gombe State, while the specific objectives included determination of incidence and recurrence, host-associated risk factors, effect of weather on incidence, and overall counts of typhoid occurrences based on gender, age, and location. Incidence from 2015 to 2019 and recurrence for 2019 were determined using incidence proportions which were calculated from hospital records. A questionnaire was designed, validated, and used to obtain data for determining host-associated risk factors. Simple random sampling was used to collect information from 663 consenting respondents and the obtained data were analysed using Chi-square test for association and binomial logistic regression to obtain risk factors for typhoid occurrence and recurrence, respectively. Weather data from 2015 to 2019 were obtained from Nigeria meteorological agency, fitted to the hospital data, and analysed using Poisson regression to determine their effects on the incidence of

the disease. Sum of counts were extracted from the hospital records based on gender, age, and location. Results from the study revealed that both typhoid incidence and recurrence were high in the study area because the number of cases were all greater than 100 per 100,000 persons per year for all the years included in the study. The questionnaire was easy to read and understand based on the Flesch reading ease score of 70.8 and Flesch-Kincaid grade level test value of 6.0, had good content validity based on the overall Fleiss' (Multi rater) kappa value of 0.623, had good construct validity and internal consistency based on Cronbach's alpha and McDonald's omega values of 0.720 and 0.703 respectively, and had good test-retest reliability based on ICC value of 0.736 (99% CI = 0.533 to 0.878). Typhoid incidence was significantly associated with the variables for vaccination ($\chi^2 = 39.729, p < 0.01$), house help ($\chi^2 = 16.909, p < 0.01$), typhoid patient at home ($\chi^2 = 13.393, p < 0.01$), hand washing before handling food ($\chi^2 = 22.856, p < 0.01$), consuming iced/frozen items ($\chi^2 = 16.805, p < 0.01$), boiling drinking water ($\chi^2 = 49.633, p < 0.01$), and eating commercial foods/drinks ($\chi^2 = 27.864, p < 0.01$). Typhoid recurrence was significantly predicted by not sure of been vaccinated (OR = 2.962, CI = 1.290 to 6.802, $p < 0.01$), not having another typhoid patient at home (OR = 1.799, CI = 0.998 to 3.244, $p < 0.01$), and drinking unboiled water sometimes (OR = 2.130, CI = 1.023 to 4.434, $p < 0.01$). Increases in typhoid cases were also significantly predicted by increase of 1°C in minimum temperature (OR = 1.080, CI = 1.048 to 1.114, $p < 0.01$) and increase of 5% in humidity (OR = 1.041, CI = 1.031 to 1.051, $p < 0.01$). Females, individuals aged 21 to 30, and more populated areas, had the highest occurrences of the disease. At the end of this study, it was established that the designed/validated questionnaire is easy to read and understand, has moderate reliability, and good validity, hence can be used for collecting data to identify typhoid risk factors in the study area. It was also discovered that increase in typhoid incidences are related to elevations in temperature and humidity, and to some host-associated factors. It is thus believed that these findings will be invaluable to identification of populations at high risk of the disease, design of fitting prevention/control efforts, and guiding Government's decisions on resource prioritization and efficient allocation of funds for prevention and control efforts against the disease.

Abstrak tesis yang Dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Doktor Falsafah

EPIDEMIOLOGI TIFOID DI KAWASAN METROPOLITAN GOMBE, NEGERI GOMBE, NIGERIA

Oleh

UMAR ABDULLAHI TAWFIQ

Jun 2021

Pengerusi : Profesor Madya Shamarina binti Shohaimi, PhD
Fakulti : Sains

Tifoid yang penyakit sistemik akut dan penyakit yang mengancam nyawa manusia yang disebabkan oleh pengambilan makanan atau air yang tercemar dengan *Salmonella typhi*. Penyakit ini menyerang semua jantina dan semua peringkat usia tetapi lebih banyak berlaku di negara-negara membangun terutamanya di Afrika dan Asia. Jangkitan *Salmonella* invasif bertanggung jawab atas beban morbiditi dan kematian yang tinggi dengan kejadian antara 11 hingga 21 juta jangkitan dan 128,000 hingga 161,000 kematian di seluruh dunia, dengan 7.2 juta kes setiap tahun di Afrika sahaja. Di Nigeria, data epidemiologi yang tepat mengenai tifoid masih sedikit dan tidak tersedia di kebanyakan Negara seperti Gombe di mana penyakit ini lama terjadi tanpa halangan. Di Gombe, kejadian tifoid diyakini diperburuk oleh ketiadaan data epidemiologi untuk keputusan kebijakan kesihatan dan rancangan intervensi kesihatan, kekurangan akses berterusan ke air minum yang selamat, kebersihan yang buruk, dan ketidakcekapan usaha sanitasi persekitaran. Oleh itu, persoalan kajian di sini merangkumi: Adakah terdapat hubungan yang signifikan antara faktor risiko yang berkaitan dengan inang dan berlakunya/berulang tifoid di metropolis Gombe? Dan Adakah hubungan yang signifikan antara keadaan cuaca dan kejadian tifoid di metropolis Gombe? Oleh itu, tujuan penyelidikan yang epidemiologi tifoid di daerah metropolitan Gombe, sementara objektif khusus termasuk penentuan kejadian dan kambuhan, faktor risiko yang berkaitan dengan host, kesan cuaca terhadap kejadian, dan jumlah keseluruhan kejadian tifoid berdasarkan jantina, umur, dan lokasi. Kejadian dari 2015 hingga 2019 dan berulang untuk 2019 ditentukan menggunakan perkadaran kejadian yang dikira dari rekod hospital. Soal selidik dirancang, disahkan, dan digunakan untuk mendapatkan data untuk menentukan faktor risiko yang berkaitan dengan inang. Pensampelan rawak sederhana digunakan untuk mengumpulkan maklumat daripada 663 responden yang bersetuju dan data yang diperoleh dianalisis menggunakan ujian Chi square untuk hubungan dan regresi logistik binomial untuk mendapatkan faktor risiko kejadian dan berulang tifoid. Data cuaca dari 2015 hingga 2019 diperoleh dari agensi meteorologi Nigeria, dilengkapi data

rumah sakit, dan dianalisis menggunakan regresi Poisson untuk menentukan kesannya terhadap kejadian penyakit ini. Jumlah penghitungan diambil dari catatan hospital berdasarkan jantina, usia, dan lokasi. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa kejadian dan kepulangan tifoid tinggi di kawasan kajian kerana jumlah kes semuanya lebih besar daripada 100 per 100,000 orang per tahun untuk semua tahun yang termasuk dalam kajian ini. Soal selidik ini senang dibaca dan difahami berdasarkan skor kemudahan membaca Flesch 70.8 dan nilai ujian tahap Flesch Kincaid 6.0, mempunyai kesahan kandungan yang baik berdasarkan keseluruhan nilai kappa Fleiss (Multi rater) 0.623, mempunyai kesahan konstruk yang baik dan konsistensi dalaman berdasarkan nilai omega Cronbach's alpha dan McDonald masing-masing 0.720 dan 0.703, dan mempunyai kebolehpercayaan ujian semula yang baik berdasarkan nilai ICC 0.736 (99% CI = 0.533 hingga 0.878). Kejadian tifoid dikaitkan secara signifikan dengan pemboleh ubah vaksinasi ($\chi^2 = 39.729$, $p < 0.01$), bantuan rumah ($\chi^2 = 16.909$, $p < 0.01$), pesakit tifoid di rumah ($\chi^2 = 13.393$, $p < 0.01$), mencuci tangan sebelum mengendalikan makanan ($\chi^2 = 22.856$, $p < 0.01$), memakan barang ais / beku ($\chi^2 = 16.805$, $p < 0.01$), air minuman mendidih ($\chi^2 = 49.633$, $p < 0.01$), dan makan makanan / minuman komersial ($\chi^2 = 27.864$, $p < 0.01$). Kambuhan tifoid diramalkan dengan ketara kerana tidak pasti divaksin (OR = 2.962, CI = 1.290 hingga 6.802, $p < 0.01$), tidak mempunyai pesakit tifoid lain di rumah (OR = 1.799, CI = 0.998 hingga 3.244, p kadang-kadang air tidak direbus (OR = 2.130, CI = 1.023 hingga 4.434, $p < 0.01$). Peningkatan kes tifoid juga diramalkan secara signifikan dengan kenaikan suhu minimum 1°C (OR = 1.080, CI = 1.048 hingga 1.114, $p < 0.01$) dan peningkatan kelembapan 5% (OR = 1.041, CI = 1.031 hingga 1.051, $p < 0.01$). Wanita, individu berusia 21 hingga 30 tahun, dan lebih banyak penduduknya, mempunyai penyakit yang paling tinggi. Pada akhir kajian ini, didapati bahawa kuesioner yang dirancang/disahkan senang dibaca dan difahami, mempunyai kebolehpercayaan yang sederhana, dan kesahan yang baik, oleh itu dapat digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data untuk mengenal pasti faktor risiko tifoid di kawasan kajian. Juga ditemukan bahawa peningkatan kejadian tifoid berkaitan dengan peningkatan suhu dan kelembapan, dan dengan beberapa faktor yang berkaitan dengan inang. Oleh itu, dipercayai bahawa penemuan ini akan sangat berharga untuk mengenal pasti populasi yang berisiko tinggi terhadap penyakit ini, merancang upaya pencegahan / pengendalian yang sesuai, dan membimbing keputusan Pemerintah mengenai keutamaan sumber daya dan peruntukan dana yang efisien untuk usaha pencegahan dan pengawalan terhadap penyakit ini.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I hereby express my sincere appreciation to Assoc. Prof. Dr Shamarina Shohaimi, my Supervisor/Adviser, for her guidance, kindness, patience, and the invaluable knowledge I gained from her, which enabled me to accomplish this study. I also thank Prof. Dr Syafinaz Amin Nordin (Co-Supervisor) and Dr Mohd Noor Hisham Mohd Nadzir (Co-Supervisor) for their tremendous patience, understanding, and contribution to this study. My sincere gratitude also to the rest of the thesis committee for their various endeavours towards the completion of this study.

The following are also well-appreciated for their efforts towards the success of this study: Alh. Umar Bappah (Father, PS MOE Gombe, ret.) for his support and efforts during the research, especially during the ethical clearance process, Prof. Sani Mashi (DG NIMET) for providing the weather data used in this study, Alh. Adamu Bello Wambai (UniAbuja) for his efforts towards ensuring safe delivery of the weather data, Dr Manga M. (FMC Gombe) for his efforts during the questionnaire content validation, Mal. Hamidu U. Puma, Mal. Umar Manga, Haruna Harunfat, Anas Rasheed Adams, and various others whose names are too numerous to mention, for their assistance during the data collection for this study. I also sincerely appreciate and thank my beloved wife, Saratu and our kids Hauwa'u and Ahmad for their patience, support, and encouragement throughout my research.

This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

Shamarina binti Shohaimi, PhD

Associate Professor
Faculty of Science
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Chairman)

Syafinaz binti Amin Nordin, MBchB, MPath, MHEd

Professor
Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)

Mohd Noor Hisham bin Mohd Nadzir, PhD

Senior Lecturer
Faculty of Science
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)

ZALILAH MOHD SHARIFF, PhD

Professor and Dean
School of Graduate Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date: 8 September 2022

Declaration by Members of Supervisory Committee

This is to confirm that:

- the research conducted and the writing of this thesis was under our supervision.
- supervision responsibilities as stated in the Universiti Putra Malaysia (Graduate Studies) Rules 2003 (Revision 2012-2013) are adhered to.

Signature: _____
Name of
Chairman of
Supervisory
Committee: Associate Professor Dr. Shamarina binti Shohaimi

Signature: _____
Name of
Member of
Supervisory
Committee: Dr. Mohd Noor Hisham bin Mohd Nadzir

Signature: _____
Name of
Member of
Supervisory
Committee: Professor Dr. Syafinaz binti Amin Nordin

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CDC	Centres for Disease Control and Prevention
CI	Confidence interval
DALYs	Disability-Adjusted Life-Years
DG	Director-General
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
ELISA	Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay
ESBL	Extended Spectrum Beta Lactamase
FMC	Federal Medical Centre
GMA	Gombe Metropolitan Area
GSU	Gombe State University
ICC	Intraclass Correlation Coefficient
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
LGA	Local Government Area
LMICs	Low- and Middle-Income Countries
MDR	Multi-Drug Resistant
MLST	Multi-Locus Sequence Typing
MOE	Ministry of Education
NA	Not Available
ND	Non-Determinable
NIMET	Nigeria Meteorological Agency
NPC	Nigeria Population Commission
PHC	Primary Health Care
SD	Standard Deviation

SE	Standard Error
TCV	Typhoid Conjugate Vaccine
TSM	Trimethoprim-Sulfamethoxazole
TT	Typhoid toxoid
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization
XDR	Extensively Drug-Resistant



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

Typhoid fever has become a serious health problem that needs urgent and long-lasting interventions by health authorities because it is one of the major bacterial disease infecting people, especially in the sub-Saharan Africa region, where its morbidity and mortality rates are high (Masuet-Aumatell & Atouguia, 2020). Typhoid disease is projected to have resulted in 21.6 million infections and 216,500 mortalities worldwide in the year 2000 (Bhan, Bahl, & Bhatnagar, 2005), and amid 9.9 to 24.2 million illnesses and 75,000 to 208,000 mortalities per year by 2017 (Adesegun et al., 2020). It is typical in many nations where substandard sanitary facilities, unhygienic habits, poverty and lack of adequate knowledge exist (Mike et al., 2017). In West Africa, Nigeria is one of the nations with substandard water sources and poor sanitary practices due to various authorities' inept efforts, which leads to inferior standards of water and subsequent water-borne diseases, including typhoid fever (Adeyinka et al., 2014). Detailed information on typhoid disease epidemiology in Nigeria is very scanty (Wong et al., 2016), and availability and understanding of this information are crucial in directing public health efforts for typhoid disease prevention and control interventions (Crump, Luby, & Mintz, 2004). However, information regarding typhoid disease incidence has been rare in small and middle-income states (Antillón et al., 2017).

Many health information gaps exist in many states of developing nations concerning the health problems resulting from typhoid fever (Obaro, Tam, & Mintz, 2017). This typhoid disease has remained a problematic issue in less industrialised states. Most attention on typhoid fever problem lately has been on Asian towns, in which alarming incidence rates were recorded in town slums, yet, not a lot has been discussed on typhoid fever deterrence in the African continent, in which little detailed scientific investigations have been carried out (Breiman, Cosmas, Njuguna, Audi, Olack, et al., 2012).

In recent years, relatively high prevalence rates of *Salmonella* spp were documented in few parts of Nigeria (Odikamnoru et al., 2017), with one report having an overall high mortality rate (Agu et al., 2015), and another report showing a high prevalence of the disease among children aged 1 to 10 (Adabara et al., 2012). However, this principally relies on comprehensive surveillance and analysis, which are invaluable in tracking antibiotic-resistant typhoid pathogens' development and spread (Tahir, 2019).

In Lagos State, Nigeria, hospital archives ranging from those of 1993 to 2015, along with supplementary information from a preceding research carried out in seven healthcare installations in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, and three healthcare facilities in Kano State ranging from 2008 to 2017 and from 2013 to 2017, respectively, revealed that there were drops in drifts of positivity proportion of *Salmonella typhi* from Abuja but with added unpredictable drifts from Lagos and Kano States. But from Lagos State, above 80% of the typhoid pathogens cultured throughout the timeframe studied displayed multiple drug resistance with a largely elevating pattern (Akinyemi et al., 2018). Also, in Ituku/Ozalla area of Enugu State, Nigeria, multi-drug resistant (MDR) *S. typhi* were detected in 426 patients (52.6%) from a total of 810 feverish individuals between the years of 2013 and 2016 (Ohanu et al., 2019).

The frequency of antibiotic-resistant *S. typhi* infections has been rising worldwide, thereby heightening the need for moving forward with an all-inclusive and wide-ranging plan for efficient control and prevention of the disease (Lindsay et al., 2019). In some regions of the African continent, multi-drug resistant (MDR) *S. typhi* occurrence seems to be rising, and in some instances, outbreaks related to this MDR species were reported (Britto, Wong, Dougan, & Pollard, 2018). In the sub-Saharan region of Africa, acquired resistance to antibiotics used against typhoid has become more common, with this resistance contributing largely to undermining efforts in treating cases of the disease (Okeke et al., 2007). With hopes of availability of more successful vaccines soon, it has become necessary to recognise the various geographic outlines of typhoid fever risks and determinants to successfully identify the ideal target populations for vaccination programmes in order to successfully control and prevent the disease (Lee, Mogasale, Mogasale, & Lee, 2016).

Typhoid fever can be prevented by creating conditions that reduce or eliminate host-associated risk factors which are factors that revolve around the typhoid-risk-elevating attitudes and practices of individuals such as lack of handwashing, eating contaminated food, and drinking unboiled water. These preventive conditions include good sanitary practices, improving the hygiene of water supply, establishment of standard sewage and waste disposal systems, and effective vaccination of populations at risk (Iperepolu et al., 2008), hence, adequate information on typhoid epidemiology is required to recommend suitable, feasible, and tolerable public health interventions to control and prevent the disease menace in a community (CDC, 2012).

1.2 Problem Statement

An estimated 12 million occurrences and above 128,000 mortalities are documented each year resulting from typhoid fever. These typhoid cases are probably underreported due to poor epidemiological information which is supposed to provide comprehensive data on the diseases' occurrence, determinants, and distribution (Techasaensiri et al., 2018). Findings indicated that populations in regions of sub-Saharan Africa are still well affected by the

disease. Alarming occurrences of rampant typhoid fever were reported from a municipal populace in Kenya between 2007–2009. Since 2008, alarming outbreaks of typhoid have been documented in poorly developed parts of Malawi, Uganda, developed parts of Zimbabwe, Zambia (Carias et al., 2015), while significant prevalence of the disease has also been reported in parts of Nigeria which have poor access to safe water (Satterthwaite, 2017).

The Typhoid Fever Surveillance in Africa Program, referred to by the acronym TSAP, was purposefully created by the International Vaccine Institute in the year 2009 to bridge the existing information breaches regarding invasive *Salmonella* illnesses in sub-Saharan African nations, and to explicitly approximate the impact of the problems resulting from bloodstream contagions instigated by the main bacterial pathogen known as *S. typhi*. At the end of the program, the TSAP had successfully realised this ruthless objective, discovering extreme incidences of typhoid disease in both rural and urban populaces of numerous nations of the sub-Saharan Africa region. These outcomes produced by efforts of the TSAP had unquestionably decreed the course of forthcoming typhoid studies in the African continent (Baker et al., 2016). This venture had also created analogous enteric infections survey information within the African continent which formed the foundation for enactment of evidence-based public health intercessions comprising vaccinations and gauging of their effects (IVI, 2011).

Upon completion of TSAP, the Severe Typhoid Fever in Africa Program known with the acronym SETA was launched in the year 2015 and was targeted at advancing on the Typhoid Fever Surveillance in Africa Programs' output by exploiting and escalating on the formerly recognized typhoid survey set-up in the sub-Saharan African nations. Six nations were included in the program and were selected based on varying criteria which included demonstrating elevated and endemic typhoid occurrences for Burkina Faso, Ghana, and Madagascar, persisting requirement for within-nation surveys on typhoid disease for Ethiopia, and worth of outspreading to further research in nations with huge numbers of inhabitants for the Democratic Republic of Congo and Nigeria. The survey locations situated in these nations have already been unified into the SETA program for the purpose of data harmonization and multi-national surveillance and data comparison (Park et al., 2019).

Despite the year 2008 calls for comprehensive data collection on typhoid in Africa by the World Health Organization, there is still a dearth of epidemiological information regarding this disease in Africa. This is believed to be caused by some limiting factors like hitches in preparations for data collection from very ill patients in an already inefficient health establishment and homogenizing collection of information in the presence of scarce funds and manpower (Khatib et al., 2017). Also, other issues that are believed to contribute to this dearth of data include lack of standard local typhoid surveillance in the presence of flawed methods of diagnosis in healthcare settings, which lead to generation of records with intermittent gaps which fail to get properly accredited and unified with

national and regional health information databases or systems (Steele, Burgess, Diaz, Carey, & Zaidi, 2016a).

In a country where typhoid fever is endemic and where minimal information relating to the morbidity, mortality and determinants of the disease are available in published scientific literature, or where such information was generated using disproportionate sample sizes or executed within a limited geographical range and so cannot be used to represent the total population accurately, new and restructured information is needed in creating efficient prevention and control schemes like vaccine schedules and programmes, and also in identifying individuals at risk within the general population, for whom proper public health interventions can be initiated. In addition, a greater appreciation of socio-environmental risk factors for the disease may increase the successes of efforts in the control of the disease (Corner et al., 2013). Also, it is believed that changes in weather conditions could influence *S. typhi* transmission, even though the profile has yet to be fully understood, many reports have indicated the effects of hot weather and rains to be significant in the transmission of this disease pathogen (Pitzer et al., 2018). Dearth in surveillance data concerning invasive *Salmonella* infections in sub-Saharan Africa has since 2008 made the World Health Organization to call for a continent-wide approach to produce more precise data on the occurrences and antibiotic resistance of *Salmonella* infections (Baker et al., 2016).

The resistance of typhoid to generally utilised antibiotics is increasing and has resulted in significant concerns because some *S. typhi* strains have shown marked resistance to some oral antibiotics like cotrimoxazole, chloramphenicol, and ampicillin; this emergence has become a significant public health threat in Nigeria (Akinyemi et al., 2018), hence, precise and comprehensive typhoid disease burden assessments are required considering this increase in antibiotic resistance by the pathogen and escalating discussions regarding typhoid vaccines (Stanaway et al., 2019).

Efficient control of typhoid relies heavily on a proper understanding of disease epidemiology and clinical and diagnostic information. However, there is still a lot to understand regarding the study of this human-restricted pathogenic microorganism and the complex nature of its infections, especially in areas like Africa, where the disease is endemic. One of the main obstacles to typhoid control is developing multidrug-resistant species, which puts global antimicrobial therapy at risk.

Vaccines against typhoid fever have remained accessible to control and prevent the disease since the year 1896; however, insufficient information regarding the burden of the disease has hindered their routine use as tools for efficient prevention of typhoid in endemic locations (Khan et al., 2017). Due to the future accessibility of Vi-conjugate vaccines against typhoid, identification of populations most at risk and proper timing of vaccine schedules are needed to achieve the highest efficiency in the control efforts against the disease. This

requirement is greatly hindered due to the absence of adequate population-based information on disease incidence and burden, especially for school-aged and pre-school aged children who are deemed to benefit most from the conjugated form of the Vi polysaccharide vaccine (Pham et al., 2016).

Inadequate and imprecise disease burden estimates extremely hinder both regional and global decision-making concerning typhoid vaccines. Immunisation staff and ministries of health need adequate and precise information from several areas in the state or nation to activate a health intervention process and persuade other related ministries to fund these processes (Khan et al., 2017). This absence of accurate information has made conclusions regarding priorities and allocation of resources problematic and is thought to negatively affect ventures into control and prevention of typhoid disease (Fraser et al., 2007). In 2018, the world health organisation (WHO) stated that urgency is needed in producing information that can further help schedules of immunisations against typhoid and policies on the vaccinations against this disease (WHO, 2019).

In Gombe State, Nigeria, there have been very few scientific publications about typhoid epidemiology. These publications are deemed inadequate and imprecise due to the small number of samples, inadequate factors analysed, and small geographical area covered. This is thought to have led to the continued occurrence and spread of the disease, spread of antibiotic-resistant pathogens, and ineffectiveness of any control strategy that might be in existence since it is a known fact that without adequate epidemiological data, the true extent of a disease burden and the populations most at risk cannot be ascertained, and as such a proper target population for health interventions and the type and scale of such interventions cannot be determined. Also, based on public health records and verbal conversations with some ministry of health staff, there have been no typhoid vaccinations, health policies, or any related health program for typhoid control within the past 10 years in Gombe, and Nigeria in general.

At the end of this research, it is expected that adequate and precise epidemiological data on typhoid fever in the Gombe metropolitan area of Gombe State, Nigeria, will be obtained, and these findings are expected to provide information that can be used by relevant authorities to identify populations at risk of the disease and make calculated decisions on how, where, and when to deploy health interventions for the efficient control and prevention of the disease.

1.3 Justification for The Study

To create an investment case for disease prevention and control efforts, reliable estimates for the burden of that disease are crucial. For countries to implement the recent WHO recommendations on the usage of typhoid vaccines, a proper understanding of the disease epidemiology at both the national and state levels is required (Crump, 2015). In Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, most typhoid fever happens in developing and under-developed countries. Data on the incidence of

typhoid fever remains uncertain in the majority of countries where the disease is endemic, and along with extensive spatial and temporal heterogeneity, serious challenges result toward efforts in implementation and integration of typhoid conjugate vaccines into existing immunisation programmes against the disease (Andrews et al., 2019). There is a global need for epidemiologists to properly understand shifts in typhoid trends and its pathogen because proper management and control of the disease seriously depend on this understanding (Wain et al., 2015).

This study has both applied and technical relevance. In this research, additions are intended to be made to the works of Carias et al. (2015) and the works of Baker, Hombach, & Marks (2016), who argued that typhoid fever incidence may be much higher than currently understood in Africa, and to the works of Andrews et al. (2019) and Stanaway et al. (2019), who implied that accurate and detailed estimates of enteric fever burden are required for an effective vaccine program. This addition can be found useful in the control and prevention of the disease.

More applied relevance can be found in the fact that the data expected to be obtained at the end of this study can beneficially affect long-term health interventions for populations at risk, as was emphasised by Khan et al. (2017). In addition, decision making on priorities and resource allocation would be easier and more efficient and may positively impact ventures in typhoid fever control and prevention, as was discussed by Fraser, Paul, Leibovici, Acosta, & Goldberg (2007).

The technical relevance of this study is that the information expected to be acquired from the findings of this research can lead to further understanding of socio-environmental factors associated with risk of typhoid illness which could greatly assist in further understanding of the transmission of the disease and in targeting disease control efforts as was discussed by Corner, Dewan, & Hashizume (2013).

This study is also relevant to the achievement of the World Health Organization's third sustainable development goal (SDG), which is to "Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages", which among other things, involves the combating of water-borne diseases which includes typhoid fever (WHO, 2017a).

Also, in Nigeria, reports from a retrospective study involving documentations of typhoid cases in Lagos, Kano, and Abuja, revealed that there were drops in drifts of positivity proportion of *S. typhi* from Abuja but established unpredictable drifts from Lagos and Kano States. In addition, more than half of the isolates from Lagos were MDR strains (Akinyemi et al., 2018b). These findings further highlight the need for generation of epidemiological data to continuously monitor shifts in occurrences of typhoid and the resistance pattern drifts of the pathogens.

This study was focused on Gombe which has an approximate population of 489,000 individuals because standard published scientific literature on typhoid epidemiology is non-existent for the area even though typhoid cases have continued to be treated in many of the healthcare facilities. Thus, an understanding of the risk factors and distribution of cases will positively impact design and implementation of targeted health interventions such as vaccinations and provision of safe drinking water and sanitation in the area.

This study is also an attempt to fill the existing knowledge gap regarding typhoid epidemiology in Gombe, and if successful, will serve as a baseline or model for future detailed epidemiological studies and interventions against typhoid in other States of Nigeria.

This study will also be of benefit to the community because efforts aimed at typhoid control will be targeted at the specific problem instead of targeting problems at random, thus providing faster and more efficient effects of the health intervention to the population. In addition, organizations such as the World Health Organization will benefit from the findings of this study because data that will aid in accomplishment of some of their set goals will be made available.

Also, policy makers will have adequate data for efficient resource/funds allocation, budgeting, planning, and implementation of health interventions, thus producing efficient outcomes and eventually making efficient use of the countries funds and resources, thereby also aiding in reducing economic difficulties of the nation.

1.4 Research Questions

- i. Is there a significant association between the host-associated risk factors and the occurrence and recurrence of typhoid fever in GMA?
- ii. Is there a significant association between weather conditions and the incidence of typhoid in GMA?

1.5 Hypotheses

- i. There is no significant association between the host-associated risk factors and the occurrence and recurrence of typhoid in GMA.
- ii. There is no significant association between the weather conditions and the incidence of typhoid in GMA.

1.6 Research Objectives

General objective: To determine the epidemiology of typhoid fever in the Gombe metropolitan area (GMA) of Gombe State, Nigeria.

Specific objectives:

- i. To determine the incidence and recurrence of typhoid in GMA.
- ii. To determine the distribution of typhoid based on gender, age, and location in GMA.
- iii. To determine the effect of weather conditions on the incidence of typhoid in GMA.
- iv. To identify the host-associated risk factors (predictors) for the incidence and recurrence of typhoid in GMA.

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