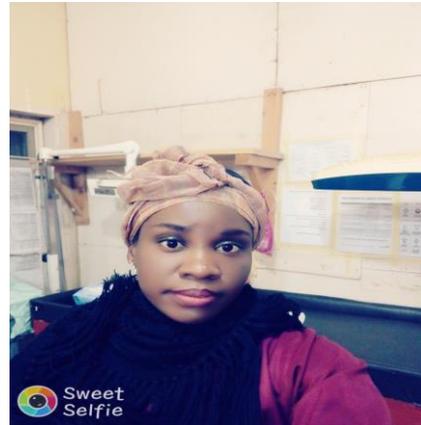


Working in a “Miracle Center”



As I rose from bed that morning to prepare for work, uneasy thoughts occupied my mind. The thoughts of Lassa fever hasn't disappeared yet, and now COVID-19 pandemic news was all over.

Working as a midwife in my local community does not just give me the privilege of being the first to welcome newborns, it has also given me the opportunity to be among the first who have contact with the carriers of new ailments. Fear is everywhere and triaging patients hasn't been easy.

When I reached the clinic, I could tell that I was not the only one facing these worries. I heard the whispers of our pregnant women, telling and describing to each other what they had heard regarding COVID-19 and how it is affecting everyone, especially the rich and mighty. They said COVID-19 was a scam used by the government to exploit the poor masses and an excuse for their nonchalant attitude.

I tried to concentrate on my work and also prepare to see my next patient, but the next words I heard sent cold shivers from my head to my feet. A young woman pregnant with her first child said, “This hospital has solutions to every problem we face ... including this new sickness.” She spoke in one of the local languages.

All of a sudden, I knew why our facility is referred to as a “miracle center,” at least by some members of the local communities. As I struggled with how to respond to what my patient had just said, her next words brought me back to my environment: “Mallama ba gaskiya ba? meaning, nurse is it not true?”

“Abubuwan da kika ji akan cutar COVID ba duka ne gaskiya ba, meaning, all that you heard regarding COVID-19 is not true.” These were my words to her as she smiled and took her seat before me.

From what my ears picked up that morning, it was clear to me that misconceptions about COVID-19 are everywhere. From that day, we have continued to listen more deeply to our patients, for only when we know what they are hearing, can we provide them with what they need to know to protect themselves.

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