



**PRESS RELEASE:
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COVID-19: STATE OF CHILDREN IN GHANA

Child Rights International, as part of ensuring the safety of children and provide information on the state of COVID-19 regarding children in Ghana, our staff is monitoring activities nationwide and assessing data from the Ghana Health Service, the Ghana Education Service and other sources to steady COVID-19 situation in children..

Our interest is to show real data and the behaviour pattern of COVID-19 among children in Ghana and also create a balance for effective policy direction that will be beneficial to children. The best interest of the child is the underpinning principle in this quest.

Child Rights International has studied the behaviour of COVID-19 among children in other countries. In the United States, for example, for every 100,000 tests conducted among children, 3,742 children tested positive representing 12.8% of overall cases.

In Ghana, from 11th March to 9th November, 2020, out of 49,202 who contracted the COVID-19 virus, 2,180 children below 18 years representing 4.43% of the total contraction rate in Ghana.

From 10th November, 2020 to 4th February, 2021, a total of 1,737 children within the age cohort of 0-17 years have tested positive to COVID-19 representing 1.04% increase. But, the relative months show an exponential increase of COVID-19 in children looking at the related periods of months. Cumulatively, a total of 3,917 children have contracted the virus since March 2020, representing 5.47% of the total contraction rate in Ghana.

At Child Rights International, together with our medical experts and according to global trends, we have decided on three major indicators in determining the severity of COVID-19 among children and how policies must be formulated to protect children.

The indicators are:

1. Cases of Infection Among Children
2. Cases of Admission or Hospitalization of Children
3. Cases of Mortality

Cases of Infection Among Children:

Based on the data, there is an increase of COVID-19 infections in children by 1.04% in terms of the relative months is high. This is worrying. For example, in Akosombo International

School, out of 553 students tested, 73 students tested positive representing 13.2%. Some schools in Greater Accra, Western, Ashanti and Eastern Region have recorded cases.

Cases of Admission or Hospitalization:

The cases of admission in Ghana is below 1% even though there is an increase in the percentage when it comes to the infection in children. Only one child was admitted and has since been discharged. The available data indicate that hospitalization in children are virtually absent as compared to adults with COVID-19, suggesting that children may have less severe illness from COVID-19 compared to adults as stated in our last “COVID-19: State of Children in Ghana” Report.

Cases of Mortality:

From the 10th of November 2020 to 4th February, 2021, no child died as a result of COVID-19 infection.

Interpretation

Based on the three indicators, Ghana has not reached the level of risk to determine whether schools should be closed down or not. However, as a country, we have met the first indicator, which in our opinion, is a worrying situation. Even though we have not gotten to the level of the 2nd and 3rd indicators, it is still necessary for the country to strictly adhere to the COVID-19 protocols. There must be effective strategies in place to reduce the spread of the virus and measures to provide first class services for children affected by COVID-19.

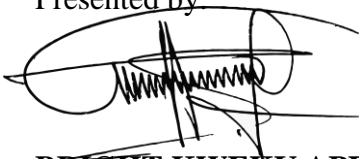
Recommendation

1. Government should make it a policy to engage pediatricians in providing care and treatment for children who may suffer severe conditions. Treatment of COVID-19 among children is a specialized service and must be treated as such.
2. Recent data indicate that the number and rate of pediatric cases are steadily increasing and therefore government should consider random testing in schools.
3. Ghana Education Service must intensify its educational programmes in schools to reduce infection of COVID-19 among children.

Conclusion

Parents must join in the fight against COVID-19 by ensuring that children going to school or interacting with their friends do so under strict adherence to the protocols.

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