Emergency Yellow Fever Mass Vaccination in Post-Civil War Liberia
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Over the span of four months, several national and international agencies collaborated to create a yellow fever mass vaccination campaign in Liberia, Africa. Yellow fever is an infectious disease carried by the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito. Symptoms include fever, chills, headache, muscle ache, abdominal pain, nausea, nosebleeds, vomiting, weakness, mental confusion, and jaundice, giving yellow fever its name. In January, 4 laboratory confirmed cases (3 of which died) and many other suspected cases prompted the WHO to declare an outbreak in mid-February. A mass vaccination campaign followed from late February through mid-April; the goal was to vaccinate 80% of the population of Bong and Nimba Counties. However, the original population number in Bong County was inaccurate, resulting in inflated number of how many Liberians were immunized. Through careful surveying and thoughtful insight, a second Bong County “catch-up” mass-vaccination was avoided and efforts could instead focus on integrating yellow fever immunization in Liberia’s Extended Program on Immunization.

Questions:

1. How does having past experience help or hinder the yellow fever mass vaccination campaign?
2. Why are just a few cases of yellow fever worthy of an outbreak investigation?
3. What is social mobilization and how was it important to the campaign?
4. What is the cold chain system?
5. Why is the goal 80% vaccination coverage?
6. How does politics affect the investigation?
7. How does speaking with the locals help with the investigation?
8. The value of the denominator (population size) was crucial to this investigation—why?
9. Why were two different surveys used to determine vaccination coverage in Bong County?