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**Editorial Office**  
*The American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene*

**Dear Editors,**

I am pleased to submit our manuscript, “*Contact networks of small mammals highlight potential transmission foci of Lassa mammarenavirus*”, for consideration for publication in The American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene. This study presents a novel methodological approach to understanding rodent-rodent interactions in a Lassa fever-endemic region of Sierra Leone, integrating epidemiological and ecological data within a One Health framework. By constructing inferred contact networks of small mammals across a land-use gradient, we provide new insights into the prevalence and determinants of potential pathogen transmission—critical factors influencing zoonotic spillover risk.

Our findings contribute to the growing body of evidence supporting tailored, context-specific interventions to reduce zoonotic disease risk. By applying network-based analyses and spatial epidemiology, we offer a new perspective on pathogen transmission within host communities, moving beyond traditional exposure models that focus solely on human-rodent interactions. This methodological approach has broad applications for understanding the transmission dynamics of other rodent-borne zoonoses and aligns well with the interdisciplinary scope of AJTMH.

I had the opportunity to present an earlier iteration of this work at the 2023 ASTMH Annual Meeting in Chicago as part of a One Health session, supported by an ASTMH/Gates Foundation Annual Meeting Travel Award. Given AJTMH’s commitment to advancing tropical medicine and its history of publishing impactful research on Lassa fever and zoonotic disease ecology, we believe this manuscript is an excellent fit for the journal.

We confirm that this submission is original, has not been published elsewhere, and is not under consideration at another journal. All authors have approved the manuscript and its submission. We have no conflicts of interest to declare.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to the possibility of contributing to AJTMH and welcome any feedback the editorial team may have.

Sincerely,

**Dr. David Simons**