Ebola virus disease outbreak in western Africa

Zsuzsanna Jakab
WHO Regional Director for Europe
Largest EVD outbreak ever

As of 31 October 2014, countries have reported 13,567 cases including 4,951 deaths:

- The outbreak began in Guinea in December 2013.
- It had involved local transmission in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone but also Nigeria (20), Spain (1) and USA (4).
- 523 health care workers infected, 269 died
- Medical evacuations to France, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, UK and the USA
Why is this outbreak different?

- First outbreak with **movements** of large groups of people, affecting big cities and multiple countries at once.
- Countries’ **coping capacity** has not been adequate to face such a large outbreak.
- Affected countries have **weak** health systems, lacking infrastructure and human resources.
- The response efforts go **beyond** medical needs and address social, economic, development, logistic and security challenges.
Senegal (17 Oct.) and Nigeria (20 Oct.) Ebola free
Public health strategies to control the outbreak

• **Diagnosis:** Testing in WHO reference laboratories
  – Handling specimens requires highest biosecurity level (BSL 4)

• **Case management:**
  – Strict infection prevention and control (IPC) measures required (patient isolation, PPE etc.) and clinical management

• **Interrupt transmission chains:** Contact tracing and 21-days follow-up

• **Community participation** to change risky behaviour and support the public health response
International Health Regulations (IHR 2005)

• Emergency Committee meetings, 6-7 August, 22 September and 22 October 2014


• Recommendations to:
  • States with Ebola transmission
  • States with a potential or confirmed Ebola Case, and unaffected States with land borders with affected States
  • All States
WHO recommendations to all States

- No general ban on international **travel or trade**.
- States should be **prepared** to detect, investigate, and manage Ebola cases.
- **Exit screening** recommended.
- **Mass gatherings** not to be postponed and participants from affected countries not to be banned.
- States should be prepared to facilitate the **evacuation and repatriation** of their nationals who have been exposed to Ebola.
- States should provide travelers to Ebola affected and at-risk areas and the general public with relevant **information**.
Beyond a public health emergency…

UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER)

- 18 September 2014: UNSC Resolution 2177 (2014)
- First-ever UN emergency health mission; HQ in Accra, Ghana
- **Objective**: work with others to stop the Ebola outbreak
- **Strategic guidance**: SG's Special Envoy, David Nabarro
- **Operational direction**: SG's Special Rep., Anthony Banbury
- **Overall health strategy**: WHO
- **Other UN agencies**: will act in their area of expertise (UNICEF, UNOPS, UNDP, WFP, FAO...)

World Health Organization
Regional Office for Europe
## Response to outbreak

### Ebola Treatment Centres

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Currently operational</th>
<th>Opening soon, FMT identified</th>
<th>In need of FMT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Ebola Treatment Centre Beds

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<th>Currently operational</th>
<th>Opening soon, FMT identified</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>593</td>
<td>1,073</td>
<td>1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>877</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,047</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,110</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,550</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Source:** World Health Organization (Regional Office for Europe)
Vaccines and treatment development

• 2 potential vaccines in pre-clinical trials and 5 candidate vaccines under initial consideration

• Extraordinary fast-track procedures coordinated by WHO

• Clinical trials expected to start by January 2015

• Scale up of vaccine stocks latest by June 2015

• Several potential treatments, including blood products from survivors considered
The risk to Europe

- The risk of Ebola spreading in Europe is **very low**.
- Sporadic imported cases of Ebola virus disease in Europe and accidental contamination **remain possible**.
- European countries have **robust** health systems and are well **prepared** to respond to Ebola.
- Low **risk tolerance** in Europe
What does strong health systems mean?

- Strong **surveillance** systems
- **Laboratory** capacity
- **Case** management
- Equipped **hospitals** with isolation wards
- **Trained** doctors and nurses
- Strict adherence to **infection prevention and control** measures
- Arrangements for tracing and following **contacts**
- Risk **communications**
Ebola and international travel

- WHO **recommends** exit screening in affected countries of departing travelers.
- Countries who decide to do entry screening need to ensure it does **not interfere** with travel and trade and should **share experiences**.
- The main issue is to provide travelers with good **information**.
Medical evacuation

“Countries should be prepared to facilitate the evacuation and repatriation of [their] nationals exposed to Ebola”.

*IHR Emergency Committee*

- Medical evacuation *assures* international workers are available to help.
- WHO *coordinates* medical evacuation for Ebola infected international workers.
- **Treatment facilities** are being established in West Africa for international responders.
WHO overall support in Europe

- Early **detection**, risk **assessment** and **investigation**.
- Overall **policy** guidance.
- Support on **capacity** assessment and scaling up.
- Technical assistance on **preparedness** strengthening.
- **Coordination** with EU and UN.
- Support to the **global** efforts (i.e. staff deployment and advocacy).
The real fight is not in Europe

- The most effective way to prevent Ebola infections in Europe is to control the epidemic in **West Africa**.
- This requires a fast and strong **response**.
- The international community is **scaling up** their support.

Visit www.euro.who.int/en/en/ebola