

b Ebola virus disease (EVD) outbreak

Ebola virus disease (EVD) outbreak: situation update

Three new confirmed cases were reported in Guinea during the week ending 18 October 2015. Amongst the new cases, one was reported from the Conakry, and two from Forecariah. Two cases were not registered contacts. One of the contacts was identified after post-mortem. Following genomic analysis, the case in Conakry was shown to be unrelated to the current chain of transmission in Guinea, and investigations are ongoing to identify the origin. To date, in Guinea 246 contacts are under follow-up and 253 contacts remain untraced. As at 18 October 2015, a cumulative total of 28 476 cases (laboratory-confirmed, probable and suspected) including 11 298 deaths with a case fatality rate of 40% has been reported in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. In Sierra Leone, no new confirmed EVD cases were reported for the fifth consecutive week. All contacts have completed their 21-day follow-up. However, two high-risk contacts remain untraced.

Furthermore, a case-patient who was reported on 29 December 2014 in the United Kingdom and later recovered was rehospitalised in the United Kingdom on 6 October 2015 after developing late EVD-complications. The patient is reported to be recovering. As at 13 October 2015, 62 close contacts had been identified, of whom 26 have received the rVSV-ZEBOV vaccine. Long-term health complications among those who recovered from EVD have been reported before. A study that was conducted among survivors of the Bundibugyo Ebola virus outbreak that occurred in 2007 in Uganda and their contacts showed that survivors experienced health related problems for more than two years after infection with EVD (Reference). Survivors experienced a wide range of symptoms, including but not limited to hearing loss, fatigue, impotence, severe headaches, blurred vision, joint and muscle pain and mental problems.

As at 16 October 2015 there have been no EVD cases in South Africa associated with the current outbreaks in West Africa. In addition, there are no suspected cases of EVD in South Africa at present. A total of 40 persons has been tested for EVD, of whom 32 are South Africans. All tested negative for EVD. The risk of Ebola being introduced into South Africa still remains low. However a high index of

suspicion is necessary given on-going EVD transmission in West Africa.

Enhanced surveillance for EVD

As part of the enhanced surveillance to prevent the importation of Ebola into South Africa, the Department of Health (DoH) activated the National Health Operations Centre (NATHOC) to coordinate EVD preparedness and response plans and activities. Travellers to Guinea and Sierra Leone should request prior permission from the NATHOC. However, travellers to Liberia are no longer required to apply for this permission. A written response is provided to each applicant informing them of the outcome of their request. For all travel related queries contact the NATHOC surveillance desk at: Tel: +27(0) 12 395 9636/7 or email NATHOC1@health.gov.za / NATHOC2@health.gov.za or Fax: +27(0) 86 662 0166

Laboratory testing

Testing for viral haemorrhagic fever viruses (including Ebola virus) in South Africa is only available at the NICD. EVD testing is neither warranted nor useful for persons that are not suffering from a clinical illness compatible with EVD, even in the event of compatible travel histories. The tests cannot be used to determine if the patient has been exposed to the virus and may develop the disease later.

Health care professional should direct any requests for testing to the NICD hotline, and provide a detailed clinical, travel and exposure history. should be directed to the NICD Hotline at 082 883 9920 (a 24-hour service, for healthcare professionals only)

Reference: Clark DV., et al. Long-term sequelae after Ebola virus disease in Bundibugyo, Uganda: a retrospective cohort study. *Lancet Infect Dis*. 2015 Aug;15(8):905-12. doi: 10.1016/S1473-3099(15)70152-0. Epub 2015 Apr 21.

Source: Division of Public Health Surveillance and Response, and Centre for Emerging and Zoonotic Disease NICD-NHLS.

Table 3. Number of Ebola virus disease cases and deaths in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone (as at 18 October 2015)

Country	Total cases (laboratory-confirmed, probable and suspected)	Total deaths	Case fatality rate	Number of cases among healthcare workers (Number of deaths)
Guinea	3 803	2 535	67%	196 (100)
Sierra Leone	14 001	3 955	28%	307 (221)
Liberia (as at 9 May)	10 666	4 806	45%	378 (192)
Liberia (from 29 June)	6	2	33%	
Totals	28 476	11 298	40%	881 (513)

Source: World Health Organization Global Alert and Response: Ebola situation report of 21 October 2015 (www.who.int)