

b Ebola virus disease outbreak in West Africa: update

Although the outbreak is ongoing, numbers of newly-reported suspected/laboratory-confirmed cases of Ebola virus disease (EVD) are decreasing in Guinea, the epicentre of the outbreak. Fortunately, no further cases have been identified in the capital Conakry; recent cases have only been identified in Guéckédou Prefecture. There have been no further cases reported from Liberia since the last Communiqué (April 2014). All suspected cases in Sierra Leone and Mali have tested negative for EVD. A summary of case numbers to date is shown in Table 1.

Epidemiologic analysis suggests that the first case of the outbreak was a 2-year-old child in Guéckédou Prefecture (province) who died on 06 December 2013. An infected healthcare worker is thought to have triggered spread of EVD to three other provinces. A businessman who travelled from central Guinea to the capital city Conakry and died there a day later triggered spread of EVD in Conakry. In Liberia, EVD first appeared in the

northern town of Foya on the Guinean border when a woman travelled from Guinea to visit family in the town, and infected her sister.

Zaire ebolavirus is responsible for the current outbreak, and full-length genome sequencing and phylogenetic analysis has shown it to belong to a separate clade from the known *Zaire ebolavirus* strains from DRC and Gabon. This suggests that the ebolavirus strain from Guinea was not introduced from DRC or Gabon, but rather that the strain has evolved in parallel and may have been circulating in the West African region for some time.

Further information regarding EVD and the current outbreak, including recommendations for evaluating illness in travellers returning from West Africa and indications for EVD testing can be found on the NICD website (www.nicd.ac.za).

Table 1: Ebola virus disease outbreak in West Africa: summary of cases as at 10 May 2014

Country	Total cases (laboratory-confirmed, probable and suspected)	Total deaths	CFR	Laboratory-confirmed cases	Laboratory-confirmed deaths	Date of illness onset in most recent case	Number of cases in healthcare workers
Guinea	233	157	67.4%	129	83	1 May 2014	25 (including 16 deaths)
Liberia	12	11	91.7%	6	6	06 April 2014	2

References

1. Baize S, Pannetier D, Oestereich L et al. Emergence of Zaire Ebola Virus Disease in Guinea – Preliminary Report. *N Engl J Med*. 2014 Apr 16 (Epub ahead of print)
2. Gatherer D. The 2014 Ebola virus disease outbreak in West Africa. *J Gen Virol*. 2014 May 2 (Epub ahead of print)
3. World Health Organization (www.who.int) – last accessed 15 May 2014

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