

## 5 **INTERNATIONAL OUTBREAKS OF IMPORTANCE TO SOUTH AFRICAN TRAVELLERS AND HEALTHCARE WORKERS**

### a **Ebola virus disease outbreak in West Africa: update**

The Ebola virus disease (EVD) outbreak in West Africa was first reported from Guinea in late March 2014 (although evidence suggests that the outbreak began in Guinea's Guéckédou Prefecture during December 2013), and subsequently spread to neighbouring Liberia and Sierra Leone establishing multiple outbreak foci. Although all three affected countries continued to report new cases during June 2014, the rapid increase in cases detected in Sierra Leone and Liberia is extremely concerning. This indicates a second wave of EVD transmission following the apparent decline observed in Guinea towards the end of April and early May. The cumulative numbers of cases and deaths are shown in Table 2.

The risk of infection for travellers is generally low since most human infections result from direct contact with the body fluids or secretions of infected patients, particularly in hospitals (nosocomial transmission) and as a result of unsafe procedures, use of contaminated medical devices (including needles and syringes) and unprotected exposure to contaminated body fluids.

EVD cases with ongoing transmission have been reported from the capital cities of Conakry (Guinea) and Monrovia (Liberia) during the current outbreak. Given the frequency of travel between southern and western African countries, there is a risk of EVD cases being imported into South Africa, but the risk is thought to be low at present. Healthcare or international agency workers etc. involved in the outbreak response may also travel to and present in South Africa for medical care, and a high index of suspicion is important for such cases. A detailed history regarding travel and level of contact with suspected/confirmed EVD cases is extremely important.

Further information for South African healthcare workers regarding the case definition for suspected EVD and laboratory testing can be accessed at [www.nicd.ac.za](http://www.nicd.ac.za).

**Source:** Division of Public Health Surveillance and Response, NICD-NHLS

**Table 2. Ebola virus disease outbreak in West Africa: summary of cases as at 12 July 2014**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Total cases (laboratory-confirmed, probable and suspected)</b>	<b>Total deaths</b>	<b>Case fatality rate</b>
Guinea	406	304	75%
Liberia	172	105	61%
Sierra Leone	386	194	50%
Totals	964	603	62%