

b Ebola virus disease (EVD) outbreak: update

Ebola virus disease (EVD) outbreak: situation update

The outbreak continues in the three affected countries (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone). Of growing concern is the detection of new EVD cases from unknown chains of transmission, and the re-emergence of EVD cases in Liberia after it was declared Ebola-free on 09 May 2015. On 29 June 2015, a confirmed case of EVD was detected through the routine surveillance in Margibi County in Liberia – the first in the country since 20 March 2015. The case was a 17-year-old male who became ill on 21 June, died on 28 June and subsequently tested positive for EVD. As at 25 July 2015, a further five cases have been reported in Liberia.

As at 12 July 2015, a cumulative total of 27 642 cases (laboratory-confirmed, probable and suspected) including 11 261 deaths with a case fatality rate of 41% has been reported in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. A summary of case numbers and deaths reported is shown in Table 2.

On 12 May 2015, EVD was confirmed in a healthcare worker who returned to Italy from Sierra Leone. Italy was declared Ebola-free on 20 July 2015.

Table 2: Number of Ebola virus disease cases and deaths in Guinea and Sierra Leone as at 19 July 2015

Country	Total cases (laboratory-confirmed, probable and suspected)	Total deaths	Case fatality rate	Number of cases among healthcare workers (Number of deaths)
Guinea	3 783	2 512	66%	194 (97)
Sierra Leone	13 250	3 949	30%	307 (221*)
Liberia (as at 09 May)	10 666	4 806	45%	378 (192)
Liberia (from 29 June)	6	2	33%	-
Totals	27 705	11 269	41%	879 (510)

Source: World Health Organization Global Alert and Response: Ebola situation report of 22 July 2015 (www.who.int). *Data as at 17 February

Situation in South Africa

As at 15 July 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. 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.

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.

Requests for testing (with 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).

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