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Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in West Africa

Ongoing surveillance of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in West Africa

As of 9 January 2015, a total of 21,086 confirmed, probable and suspected cases of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) have been reported, with 8,289 reported deaths in five currently affected countries (Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Sierra Leone and the United Kingdom) and four previously affected countries (Nigeria, Senegal, Spain and the United States) [1,2]. There is currently no indication that the outbreak in West Africa is under control. EVD incidence continues to fluctuate in Guinea while it appears to be declining in Liberia.

In Sierra Leone evidence continues to indicate that incidence may no longer be increasing nationally, although transmission remains intense in the western districts [2].

Weekly epidemiological situation updates can be accessed from the Public Health England (PHE) website [3], and World Health Organization (WHO).WHO data and statistics are now being updated several times per week.

A total of 820 health care workers (HCW) have developed the disease and 488 have died. The majority of cases and deaths in HCWs have been in countries with widespread and intense transmission [2].

On 29 December, a case of EVD was reported in a UK healthcare worker who had returned from volunteering at an Ebola treatment centre in Sierra Leone. A range of public health measures are being implemented by UK authorities with special attention to the investigation of all possible contacts with the patient during the flight to Scotland via Heathrow [4]. This is the first imported case of EVD to be detected in the United Kingdom. In August 2014, a confirmed case of EVD in a British healthcare worker was repatriated to the UK from Sierra Leone for treatment and has since recovered [5].

Many countries are now screening people who have travelled to Ebola-affected areas at ports of entry and further assessing those who have a raised temperature or report other symptoms compatible with EVD.

Overall, the risk of Ebola being imported into the United Kingdom continues to be low. The risk of transmission occurring within the community in the UK is, and will remain, very low due to the range of robust measures that have been put in place [6].

Please refer to our previous news items on EVD for more information.

All travellers are advised to check FCO updates on regular basis for more information on travel restrictions, safety, security and border measures in affected countries in West Africa:

- Guinea
- Liberia
- Mali
- Sierra Leone

On 4 December 2014, European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) published a scientific report assessing the risk related to household pets in contact with Ebola cases in humans. Further information is available here.
Resources

- PHE: Ebola virus: UK government response
- PHE: Ebola: public health questions and answers
- PHE: Ebola virus disease: clinical management and guidance
- WHO: Global Alert and Response, Ebola
- WHO: Personal protective equipment guidelines for Ebola response
- ECDC: EVD page
- CDC: 2014 Ebola Outbreak in West Africa

References


