



Ebola resurgence in Democratic Republic of the Congo: A rising health concern

ARTICLE INFO

Dear Editor,

Recently, the health authorities in Democratic Republic of the Congo have confirmed one case of Ebola Virus Disease in North Kivu.¹ The resurgence comes less than two months after declaring over the last outbreak.² The virus is epidemic mainly in country with a case fatality rate of more than 50%. Ebola virus is spread primarily via direct contact with the bodily fluids of infected individuals.³ WHO's recommended diagnostic tests for EVD include Automated or Semi-automated nucleic acid tests and Rapid Antigen Detection Tests.⁴

Since its discovery in 1976, 15 outbreaks of Ebola have occurred in DRC. Between 2018 and 2022 more than one outbreak has occurred every year, summing up to seven outbreaks in five years.⁵ In North Kivu province, the first outbreak recorded 3470 EVD cases from 2018 to 2020, in which 3317 cases were confirmed.⁶ In 2021, 11 cases were confirmed, and one was probably making a total of 12 cases.⁷ The last outbreak was between 23 April and 4 July 2022 in some provinces with only five cases recorded.⁸ The current resurgence was announced on 22 August 2022 following the death of a 46-year-old woman on 15 August at North Kivu who was reported to show signs of Ebola virus.⁹ Further investigations are being carried out by WHO professionals and health officials at the provincial office of the Biomedical Research National Institute.^{9,10}

WHO and the health ministry have made preventive and control interventions such as investigation and discovery of new cases, sensitize the community about the re-emergence of Ebola and provision of ring vaccination.⁸ Moreover, health authorities in North Kivu have previously succeeded in stopping several Ebola outbursts, thereby, they hope to put the resurgence under control soon.⁹

WHO has also stated measures to prevent human-human and wildlife-human transmission,⁸ and they are collaborating with health facilities in DRC to stop further spread of the disease.⁹

The Eastern part of DRC has been an arena for armed conflicts for decades. Consequently, prevention of future outbreaks in this zone is challenged by a number of political and socio-economic factors such as lack of political stability, insufficient health systems and poverty as well as emergence of other outbreaks of COVID-19, cholera and measles.⁸

The essential aspect of preventing EVD transmission is to avoid direct bodily contact with infected individuals and their body fluids. Vitaly, WHO should ensure adherence to universal control measures in all

health care facilities.¹¹

Output containing measure including ensuring safe and dignified burial of the dead, identifying people who physically contacted Ebola patients and monitoring their health for 21 days, emphasizing isolation from the infected and hygiene to prevent further spread of the virus. Health-care workers and visitors should ensure adherence of precautions when caring for patients regardless of their presumed diagnosis including proper hygiene, wearing PPE and safe injection practices.⁴ Lastly, avoiding direct contact with infected animals should be adhered and consume well-cooked animal-foods.

Funding

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Ethical approval

None.

Provenance and peer review

Not commissioned, externally peer reviewed.

Consent for publication

None.

Availability of data and materials

None.

Declaration of competing interest

None.

Acknowledgements

none.

Abbreviations: DRC, Democratic Republic of the Congo; EVD, Ebola Virus Disease; EBV, Ebola Virus; PPE, Personal Protective Equipment.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cegh.2023.101237>

Received 18 September 2022; Accepted 20 January 2023

Available online 23 January 2023

2213-3984/© 2023 Published by Elsevier B.V. on behalf of INDIACLEN. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

References

1. WHO. *The Democratic Republic of the Congo Investigates Suspected Ebola Case in North Kivu*; 2022 [Retrieved from: <https://www.afro.who.int/countries/democratic-republic/congo/news/democratic-republic/Congo/investigate/suspected/Ebola/case/north/kivu>].
 2. Heilprin John. *Ebola Resurgence Declared in DRC*; 2022 [Retrieved from: <https://healthpolicy-watchnews>].
 3. CDC. Ebola (Ebola virus disease) [Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov>].
 4. WHO. Ebola Virus Disease [Retrieved from: <https://www.who.int/news-room-fact-sheets/detail/ebola-virus-disease>; 2022].
 5. UN-GENEVA. DRC declares new Ebola outbreak after confirmed case in North Kivu – WHO [Retrieved from: <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/news-media/news/2022/08/la-rdc-declare-une-nouvelle-epidemie-debola-apres-la-confirmation-dun-cas>].
 6. WHO. *Ebola Virus Disease – Democratic Republic of the Congo*. 2020 [Retrieved from: <https://web.archive.org/web/20210311194443/https://www.who.int/csr/don/26-June-2020-ebola-drc/en/>].
 7. WHO | Regional Office for Africa. Ebola outbreak in Democratic Republic of the Congo declared over [Retrieved from: <https://www.afro.who.int/news/ebola-outbreak-democratic-republic-congo-declared-over>; 2022].
 8. Ebola virus disease – Democratic Republic of the Congo. *Who.int.*; 2022 [Retrieved from: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/disease-outbreak-news/item/2022-DON398>].
 9. *The Democratic Republic of the Congo Declares Ebola Resurgence in North Kivu*. WHO | Regional Office for Africa; 2022 [Retrieved from: <https://www.afro.who.int/countries/democratic-republic-of-congo/news/democratic-republic-congo-declares-ebola-resurgence-north-kivu>].
 10. Ebola virus disease – Democratic Republic of the Congo. *Who.int.*; 2022 [Retrieved from: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/disease-outbreak-news/item/2022-DON404>].
 11. Saeed S, Hasan S, Ahmad S, Masood R. Ebola virus: a global public health menace: a narrative review. *J Fam Med Prim Care*. 2019;8(7):2189.
- Innocent Kitandu Paul*, Sospeter Berling Sospeter, Matilda K. Basinda
Weill Bugando School of Medicine, Catholic University of Health and Allied Sciences, Mwanza, Tanzania

 Margareth Richard Mallya
Archbishop Anthony Mayala School of Nursing, Catholic University of Health and Allied Sciences, Mwanza, Tanzania

 Hans Alex Chang'a
Weill Bugando School of Medicine, Catholic University of Health and Allied Sciences, Mwanza, Tanzania

 Henoah Kabeya Ciswaka
Department of Health, Academy of Sciences and Engineering for Africa Development, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo
Department of Biomedical Sciences, Faculty of Medicine, University of Kinshasa, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo

 Goodluck Nchasi
Weill Bugando School of Medicine, Catholic University of Health and Allied Sciences, Mwanza, Tanzania
- * Corresponding author. Catholic University of Health and Allied Sciences, Mwanza, Tanzania.
E-mail address: innocentugula@gmail.com (I.K. Paul).