



BMH Medical Journal 2015;2(1):1-3 **Editorial**

Ebola: Few Thoughts for General Public and Health Care Workers

Ajith K Gopal, MD, FNB

Baby Memorial Hospital, Kozhikode, Kerala, India. PIN: 673004

Address for Correspondence: Dr. Ajith K Gopal, MD, FNB, Deputy Chief, Department of Critical Care Medicine, Baby Memorial Hospital, Kozhikode, Kerala, India. Email: dr_ajithkgopal@yahoo.com

Key Words: Ebola, health care workers

Introduction

Ebola virus disease (EVD) outbreak has occurred recently in several African countries. As we are all aware that being a disease which cause high mortality appropriate infection prevention control measures can be implemented to stop transmission. Appropriate protective measures in places like clinics, hospitals, community gatherings helps to prevent the spread of infection.

Current outbreak: a human to human transmission

Epidemics due to Ebola viruses are seen among wild animals, particularly non-human primates. Potential hosts of are non-human primates, duikers, bats, small rodents, and shrews [1].

Contact of human being with wild animals through hunting, butchering and preparing meat from infected wild animals ("bush meat") was the initial source, with subsequent transmission from human to human. And the present outbreak, are a result of human to human transmission.

Food, animals and Ebola

Certain Basic hygiene measures can help to prevent infection in people in direct contact with infected animals or with raw meat and by-products.

Hygiene measures include regular hand washing and changing of clothes and boots before and after touching these animals and their products.

And one should know that Ebola virus is inactivated through cooking. However sick and diseased animal should never be consumed.

Preventive measures for the general public

It is always better to report to the nearest health facility if you develop symptoms indicative of EVD,

Gopal AK, “Ebola: Few Thoughts for General Public and Health Care Workers” 2

including high fever, body aches, joint pain, vomiting, diarrhoea, or bleeding manifestations [2].

Certain important points should always remember that include:

1. Seek for professional clinical treatment and always Isolate the patient.
2. Minimize close contact with others.
3. Virus enters your body through your mouth, nose and eyes, or a break in the skin.
4. Hand washing with soap and water after every contact with sick people.
5. Always Provide a sick person with plenty of drinks - water, soup, tea.
6. You cannot get (infected with) Ebola by talking to people, walking in the street, or shopping in the market.
7. Ebola patients should always drink water and liters of Oral Rehydration Solution every day.
8. Aspirin or ibuprofen should not be given to sick patients because it may worsen the bleed.

Preventive measures for health care workers

Preventive measures for health care workers include the standard and specific measures [3].

Standard measures

1. Hand hygiene.
2. Disposable medical examination gloves before contact with body fluids, mucous membrane, non-intact skin and contaminated items.
3. Gown and eye protection before each procedure and patient-care activities.
4. Safe injection practices and safe handling and disposal of sharp instruments along with safe laundry and waste management should be practiced.

Specific measures

1. Isolation: Always Isolate suspected cases or cohort them in specific confined areas, separate from confirmed cases. Distance between patient bed should at least 1 meter and dedicate care equipment to suspected cases.
2. Assignment and access: Clinical and non-clinical staff to care areas should be exclusively assigned. Restrict access to all others to dedicated areas.
3. Personal protective equipment (PPE): Includes gloves, an impermeable long-sleeve gown, boots/closed-toe shoes with overshoes, and a mask and eye protection for splashes. Strict use of PPE prior to entering care areas. Perform careful removal of PPE to avoid contamination of any area of the face (i.e. eyes, nose, or mouth) or non-intact skin.
4. Injection, sharp and phlebotomy safety: Use of needles and other sharp objects should be limited, cover abrasions, and wear PPE. Puncture-resistant containers should be used to dispose sharps.

5. Environmental cleaning, waste and linen disposal: PPE (as detailed above) including heavy duty/rubber gloves should be worn by cleaners. Clean surfaces at least once a day with clean water and detergent. Clean contaminated surfaces as soon as possible, clean and then use standard hospital disinfectant (e.g. a 0.5% chlorine solution or a solution containing 1000 ppm available free chlorine). oiled linen should be placed in clearly-labelled, leak-proof bags or buckets and transported to the laundry. Scrape away solid excrement (i.e. faeces or vomit), wash with detergent and water, rinse and then soak in 0.05% chlorine for approximately 30 minutes.

6. Laboratory safety: Ensure safe handling of laboratory samples, i.e. use of PPE, safe collection and sample processes from confirmed or suspected cases.

7. Safe care of the dead: Keep the handling of human remains and dead bodies to a minimum. Wear PPE. Only trained staff should undertake the recommended procedures for burial while taking into account cultural and religious concerns.

Exposure Incidents

Evaluate, care for, and if necessary, isolate health-care workers or any person exposed to blood or body fluids from confirmed or suspected patients.

As ebola virus disease is associated with high rate of morbidity and mortality among infected patients and risk of transmission from human to human being high its better always general public should be aware of symptoms and attend medical facilities. Standard as well as specific contact, and droplet precautions are recommended for management of hospitalized patients with known or suspected Ebola virus disease.

References

1. Review of Human-to-Human Transmission of Ebola Virus. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, USA. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/transmission/human-transmission.html>. Accessed on 29th December 2014.
2. Ebola: protective measures for general public, World Health Organization. Available at: <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/ebola/what-you-need-to-know/en/>. Accessed on 29th December 2014.
3. Infection prevention and control (IPC) guidance summary. Ebola guidance package, World Health Organization. <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/ebola/evd-guidance-summary/en/>. Accessed on 29th December 2014.