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Dear Doctor,

Update on Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in Sierra Leone

We are writing to provide you with updated information on Ebola Virus Disease (EVD).

As reported by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 9 Nov 2015, there were a total of 28622 cases and 11314 deaths with an overall case fatality rate estimated to be 40%. The WHO declared Sierra Leone free of Ebola virus transmission on 7 Nov 2015, as a period of 42 days (i.e. two incubation periods for EVD) have passed since the second negative test on 25 Sept 2015 of the last laboratory-confirmed case in Sierra Leone.

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) has now updated the list of affected areas in the reporting criteria of EVD as follows:

- Guinea
- Sierra Leone (**on or before 7 November 2015**)

The updated list of affected areas is also available at http://chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/evd_affected_area.pdf.

Please kindly note that patients who have visited Sierra Leone on or before 7 November 2015 and develop EVD symptoms within 21 days after the visit still fulfill the reporting criteria. Patients meeting the reporting criteria (available at <https://ceno.chp.gov.hk/casedef/casedef.pdf>) should be isolated immediately and notified to the Central Notification Office (CENO) of CHP via fax (2477 2770), phone (2477 2772) or CENO On-line (<http://ceno.chp.gov.hk/>). Please also call our Medical Control Officer at 7116 3300 a/c 9179 for prompt investigation and arrangement of transfer of the patient to the Hospital Authority Infectious Disease Centre in Princess Margaret Hospital for isolation, testing and treatment.



Moreover, according to the latest information of WHO, Ebola virus can persist at various sites in the body for many months in some patients including the inside of the eye, semen, amniotic fluid, the placenta, breast milk and the central nervous system¹.

A recently published article “Ebola RNA Persistence in Semen of Ebola Virus Disease Survivors — Preliminary Report”² in the New England Journal of Medicine (NEMJ) showed persistence of Ebola virus RNA (as detected by quantitative reverse-transcriptase-polymerase-chain-reaction assay) in semen for up to 9 months and declining persistence with increasing months since onset of EVD. Another article “Molecular Evidence of Sexual Transmission of Ebola Virus”³ recently published in NEMJ has also reported a case of possible sexual transmission of EVD in Liberia and suggested the evidence by combining epidemiologic data with genomic analysis.

Although sexual transmission by survivors with persistent virus is a rare possibility, doctors should be aware of this possible transmission route of EVD in encountering patients with compatible symptoms.

For more information about EVD, please visit the following websites of the CHP and WHO: http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/view_content/34199.html and <http://apps.who.int/ebola/>. Thank you for your continuous support in combating the disease.

Yours faithfully,



(Dr S K CHUANG)

for Controller, Centre for Health Protection
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¹ WHO. Persistent virus in people recovering from Ebola virus disease, available at <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/ebola/virus-persistence/en/>

² G.F. Deen, B. Knust, N. Broutet et al. Ebola RNA Persistence in Semen of Ebola Virus Disease Survivors — Preliminary Report. N Engl J Med. 2015 Oct 14.

³ Mate SE, Kugelman JR, Nyenswah TG et al. Molecular Evidence of Sexual Transmission of Ebola Virus. N Engl J Med. 2015 Oct 14.