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Dear Doctor,

Update on Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in Guinea

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

As reported by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 29 December 2015, there were a total of 28637 cases and 11315 deaths with an overall case fatality rate estimated to be 40%. The WHO declared Guinea free of Ebola virus transmission on 29 December 2015, as a period of 42 days (i.e. two incubation periods for EVD) have passed since the second negative test of the last laboratory-confirmed case in Guinea on 16 November 2015.

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

- Guinea (**on or before 29 December 2015**)
- Liberia

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 Guinea on or before 29 December 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 phone (2477 2772), CENO On-line (https://cdis.chp.gov.hk/CDIS_CENO_ONLINE/ceno.html) or fax (2477 2770). 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.

Ebola Virus Disease, formerly known as Ebola haemorrhagic fever, is caused by Ebola virus. The disease is transmitted to human through contact with blood, secretions, organs or other body fluids of infected animals. Human-to-human transmission is also possible through direct contact with blood, secretions, organs or other body fluids of infected people, and indirect contact with environments contaminated with such fluids.

The incubation period of the disease is around 2 to 21 days. Patients may present with sudden onset of fever, intense weakness, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhoea, rash, followed by impaired kidney and liver function. In some severe cases, internal and external bleeding may occur. No proven treatment and licensed vaccine is available yet.

According to the information of WHO, Ebola virus can persist at various sites in the body for many months in some recovered patients including the inside of the eye, semen, amniotic fluid, the placenta, breast milk and the central nervous system¹. Moreover, a preliminary study on Ebola virus persistence in male survivors in Sierra Leone showed persistence of Ebola virus RNA (as detected by quantitative reverse-transcriptase-polymerase-chain-reaction assay) in semen for up to 9 months.² 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.