

本署檔號 Our Ref.: (2) in DH SEB CD/8/15/1

2 April 2014

Dear Medical Superintendent,

Recent Outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease in West Africa

We would like to draw your attention to the recent reports of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in the west Africa region, including Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

This outbreak was first reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) by the Ministry of Health of Guinea on 23 March 2014. Over the past few days, the disease had spread from the forested area to Conakry, the capital city of Guinea. According to the WHO, as of 31 March 2014, 122 clinically compatible cases in which 24 were laboratory confirmed, and a total of 80 deaths were reported by the Ministry of Health of Guinea. In particular, eleven of the reported cases involved healthcare workers, of which four were known to be fatal. In addition, the Ministry of Health of Liberia has reported eight clinically compatible cases with two deaths, while the Ministry of Health of Sierra Leone has also reported deaths of two probable cases in one family who died in Guinea and their bodies repatriated to Sierra Leone.

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 including chimpanzees, gorillas, fruit bats, monkeys, forest antelopes and porcupines. 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. Healthcare workers have frequently been infected through close contact with patients when infection control measures are not strictly practiced.



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 vaccine and specific

treatment is available. The disease has a case fatality rate of up to 90%. People are infectious as long as their blood and secretions contain the virus. Men who have recovered from the disease can still transmit the virus through their semen for up to 7 weeks after recovery from illness.

In Hong Kong, Ebola Virus Disease has been made statutory notifiable since July 2008 under the disease group viral haemorrhagic fever. No case of Ebola Virus Disease has been recorded in Hong Kong so far.

Medical practitioners managing returning travellers from visiting these countries with compatible symptoms are advised to take into consideration the possibility of Ebola Virus Disease. To reduce the risk of nosocomial transmission, patients must be managed in isolation facilities to prevent the spread of the infection. Healthcare workers should put on protective gears and adopt strict infection control measures when caring for suspected patient.

Medical practitioners are reminded to notify Centre for Health Protection (CHP) any suspected cases of Ebola Virus Disease 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 outside office hours for prompt investigation.

Thank you for your ongoing support in combating communicable diseases.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S K Chuang', written in a cursive style.

(Dr S K CHUANG)

for Controller, Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health