

PRIMARY RISK ASSESSMENT

Ebola in RDC

Date of the signal	Date of the RA	Signal provider	Experts consultation	Method
05/05/2018	14/05/2018	SPF Public Health	Permanent experts: Dr Valeska Laisnez (AZG), Dr Romain Mahieu (COCOM-GGC), Dr Sophie Quoilin (Sciensano), Dr Daniel Reynders (FOD), Dr Carole Schirvel (AViQ) Specific experts :	eMail consultation
Date of update	Closing date			

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PRIMARY RISK ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL PUBLIC HEALTH EVENT

Signal	<p>On 8 May 2018, the Ministry of Health (MOH) of the Democratic Republic of the Congo declared an outbreak of Ebola virus disease in Bikoro Health Zone, Equateur Province, in western Democratic Republic of Congo and on the border with Congo-Brazzaville.</p> <p>As of 13 May 2018 and according to WHO, there are 39 cases of which : 2 confirmed, 12 suspected and 25 probable.</p> <p>Five samples were sent for laboratory analysis in Kinshasa and two tested positive for Zaire ebolavirus species. Among the 39 cases, 19 were fatal (case fatality rate 49%). Three health care workers have been affected, with two suspected cases and a probable case who died.</p> <p>The cases are reported in three health zone: Bikoro (confirmed cases), Iboko and Wangata (suspected and probable cases).</p> <p>Currently the Ministry of Health in the Democratic Republic of the Congo deployed Rapid Response Teams to investigate cases and deaths reported in Bikoro health zone in the Equateur province. WHO has provided technical and operational support to the Ministry of Health and Partners to coordinate the response at all levels and MSF is setting up a treatment centre for the management of cases in Bikoro health zone. In addition, preparations are in progress for ring vaccination of contacts and the use of experimental antivirals.</p>		
Description		Score	Description / arguments
1	Cause known?	Yes	<p>Ebola virus disease (EVD) first appeared in 1976 in 2 simultaneous outbreaks, one in what is now, Nzara, South Sudan, and the other in Yambuku, Democratic Republic of Congo. The latter occurred in a village near the Ebola River, from which the disease takes its name.</p> <p>Five species of Ebolavirus have been identified: Zaire, Bundibugyo, Sudan, Reston and Tai Forest. The first three, have been associated with large outbreaks in Africa.</p> <p>The Ebola virus causes an acute, serious illness which is often fatal if untreated.</p>
2	Unexpected/unusual	Unusual but expected	<p>Although Ebola outbreaks have already occurred in DRC in the past, Ebola outbreaks are infrequent events.</p> <p>This is the ninth Ebola virus disease (EVD) outbreak in DRC since the discovery of the virus in 1976. The last outbreak of EVD in the Equateur province was in 2014 and involved 66 cases, including 49 deaths. The most recent outbreak in the country occurred in May 2017 in the health zone of Likati, province of Bas-Uele with eight reported cases.</p>
3	Severity	High	<p>Ebola virus disease is a severe, often fatal illness in humans. The case-fatality ratio is estimated to be between 50% and 90%.</p>
4	Dissemination (Low/Medium/High)	Low	<p>Although the outbreak is currently occurring in a very remote area of DRC, the spread of the disease to neighbouring areas cannot be ruled out.</p>
5	Risk of (inter)national spread	Low	<p>The risk of international spread and therefore introduction into the EU/Belgium would most probably be related to an infected traveller coming from the affected area. However</p>

			this is most unlikely, given the remote location of the outbreak, and the containment activities put in place.
Preparedness and response			
6	Preparedness	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Laboratory capacity for diagnostic of Ebola virus does exist in Belgium (at ITM). - Isolation and case management of suspected cases are possible in Belgium in the following three hospitals: UZA Antwerp, Saint-Pierre hospital (Brussels) and UZ Leuven - A number of procedures and guidelines have been developed during/after the Ebola outbreak in west Africa and are still relevant and are available (here): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To contain the public health risk in Belgium does exist ("Procédure opérationnelle destinée à la maîtrise du risque de santé publique lié à l'épidémie de fièvre hémorragique à virus Ebola ») - Case management - Management of bodies and remains - follow-up of humanitarian returning from ebola affected area - Collection and transport of infectious waste under M281 - Contact tracing of Ebola's patient contacts - Etc...
7	Specific control measures (surveillance, control, communication)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is as yet no proven treatment available for EVD. However, a range of potential treatments (blood products, immune therapies and drug therapies) are currently being evaluated. - An experimental Ebola vaccine, called rVSV-ZEBOV, proved highly protective against the deadly virus in a major trial in Guinea. It can be used for ring vaccination of contacts. - Communication has been done by WHO at international level and information on the current epidemiological situation is available on WHO website, as well as in the Belgian Ebola website together with the relevant guidelines and procedures for Belgium.
Public health impact			
A	Public health impact in Belgium (Low/Medium/high)	Low	Although not excluded the probability to have a suspected case (health care workers, resident or tourist coming back from epidemic area) in Belgium is currently very low.
B	Recommendations (surveillance, control, communication)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sciensano: Keep monitoring the epidemiological situation in DRC. And see if the extent of the outbreak increases (either in number of cases and/or spread to other areas/regions) to revise the RA in time - Federated entities and Sciensano to mention about this outbreak on their web. For information.
C	Actions		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sciensano : Put information on this outbreak in the newflash - SPF-FOD: Update the advice on the web of the SPF/FOD

			<p>Foreign Affairs regarding affected area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- SPF-FOD/ITM : Keep updating the Belgian Ebola website with the latest information- SPF-FOD/Sciensano : Review and update of the guidelines/procedures developed during/after the West-Africa Ebola epidemic and make sure the information is still relevant and up to date.
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