

Ebola virus disease epidemic in West Africa: lessons learned and issues arising from West African countries

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ABSTRACT

The current Ebola virus disease (EVD) outbreak ravaging three nations in West Africa has affected more than 14,000 persons and killed over 5,000. It is the longest and most widely spread Ebola epidemic ever seen. At the time of this overview (written November 2014), having affected eight different nations, Nigeria and Senegal were able to control and eliminate the virus within a record time. Ghana has successfully, to date, kept the virus away from the country, despite economic and social relationships with affected nations. What lessons can we learn from Nigeria, Senegal and Ghana in the current epidemic? How can the world improve the health systems in low- and middle-income countries to effectively manage future outbreaks? Recently, the Royal College of Physicians launched a new partnership with the West African College of Physicians to curtail the effects of HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis in the region. We believe that strengthened health systems, skilled human resources for health and national ownership of problems are key to effective management of outbreaks such as EVD.