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P. Shears, T.J.D. O'Dempsey

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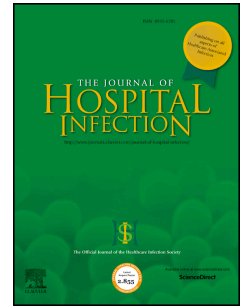
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P. Shears, T.J.D. O'Dempsey

Review

Ebola virus disease in Africa: epidemiology and nosocomial transmission

P. Shears^{a,*}, T.J.D. O'Dempsey^b

^a*Wirral University Teaching Hospital, Wirral, Merseyside, UK*

^b*Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, Liverpool, UK*

*Corresponding author. Address: Department of Infection Control, Wirral University Hospital, Upton, Wirral, Merseyside CH49 5PE. UK. Tel.: +44 (0)7850 531682.

E-mail address: pshears2@gmail.com (P. Shears).

SUMMARY

The 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa, primarily affecting Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia, has exceeded all previous Ebola outbreaks in the number of cases and in international response. There have been 20 significant outbreaks of Ebola virus disease in Sub-Saharan Africa prior to the 2014 outbreak, the largest being that in Uganda in 2000, with 425 cases and a mortality of 53%. Since the first outbreaks in Sudan and Zaire in 1976, transmission within health facilities has been of major concern, affecting healthcare workers and acting as amplifiers of spread into the community. The lack of resources for infection control and personal protective equipment are the main reasons for nosocomial transmission. Local strategies to improve infection control, and a greater understanding of local community views on the disease, have helped to bring outbreaks under control. Recommendations from previous outbreaks include improved disease surveillance to enable more rapid health responses, the wider availability of personal protective equipment, and greater international preparedness.

Keywords:

Africa

Ebola virus disease

Healthcare workers

Nosocomial transmission

Introduction

The current 2014 extensive outbreak of Ebola virus disease (EVD) in West Africa has resulted in more cases and deaths than all previous EVD outbreaks combined. There has been a particularly high transmission to, and mortality in, healthcare workers (HCWs). Nosocomial transmission has been a major cause of morbidity and mortality in EVD since the first outbreaks described in Sudan and Zaire (now Democratic Republic of Congo, DRC) in

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