



Forum: ECOSOC

Issue: The spread of Ebola in central Africa

Student Officer: Lionel Yerbanga

Position: President

Introduction

Ebola, a viral illness. More than 1800 people have died and more than 2700 have been infected in the latest outbreak in central Africa. There are several reasons why this disease is so dangerous: it can be transmitted easily between people, the incubation time is short, the initial symptoms occur suddenly, and there is no real cure available. Also, diagnosis of Ebola is hard. The succession of the stages of the illness is fast and the disease leads to death 90% of the time. Ebola is therefore a threat for the public health.

Definition of Key Terms

Hygiene

Hygiene means the conditions or practices that are done in order to maintain health and preventing diseases (like Ebola), especially through cleanliness.

Vaccine

A vaccine is a substance that helps protect against certain diseases: it contains a dead or weakened version of the microbe of the disease. It helps your immune system recognize and destroy the living microbe during a future infection.

Virus

A virus is an infective agent that uses a host cell to multiply itself. It disrupts the system where it enters by invading the cells. During the multiplication mutations can occur, which makes treatment difficult.



General Overview

Where are the Ebola epidemics?

The countries where the Ebola epidemic are, are mostly African countries where the political situation isn't stable. In this case, most attention of the government goes to other situations in the country and the attention doesn't specifically go to resolving the Ebola issue.

Also, in these countries the culture is such that physical interaction between people is very common. Even after death: in some rituals touching the corpse is part of it. This is problematic, because Ebola gets transmitted through physical interaction.

To resolve this issue, money is required. An epidemic can end by itself, but a huge number of citizens will die before the epidemic is ends itself. To shorten the time of the epidemic and save many people's life, funds are needed. But the countries concerned with the Ebola problem belong to the poorest of the world. Without the required funds, the countries cannot help themselves out of this deadly situation. Just like the overwhelming majority of illnesses, Ebola spreads faster when there is a bad hygiene. These countries aren't the cleanest, so as long as this problem persists, solving the Ebola issue is hard.

Ebola

Ebola is a virus, which causes problems with how the blood clots. This leads to internal bleeding: Ebola is a haemorrhagic fever virus.

Ebola can leave an infected body through fluids, such as saliva or sweat. Direct contact of a person with an infected body or with an object that has touched the fluid can lead to the contamination of that person.

Rapidly after infection, you can get sick and experience symptoms such as high fever, headache, muscle aches or a sore throat. In your body, Ebola kills cells, and the cells of your organs: they get very damaged after a time. It makes Ebola a very deadly disease: 90% of the infected people die. But to relativize, Ebola is rare.

To this day, the only ways to diagnose Ebola is to rule out other diseases that cause pretty much the same symptoms, or to test the blood of an infected person. And then, to treat the illness, a serum is brought in to kill the infected cells.



Major Parties Involved

Democratic Republic of Congo

This is a country in Central Africa. It is an ex colony of Belgium and its capital city is Kinshasa. The current president of DR Congo is Félix Tshisekedi. 1800 people have died from Ebola in this country. This makes the DR Congo the most major party involved in this issue.

Uganda

This is also a country in Central Africa. Uganda used to be an English protectorate. Its capital city is Kampala and the current president is Yoweri Museveni. During the Ebola outbreak in central Africa, Uganda was the second most affected country by Ebola after the DR Congo. Uganda is the second most major party involved in the Ebola issue.

South-Sudan

This country of central Africa has been involved in the very first Ebola outbreak in 1976. At that date, it was still part of Sudan.

World Health Organisation

The World Health Organization helps people from all over the world live without diseases. Especially in parts of the world like Africa, where hygiene is less good than in the rest of the world. This causes a major problem and reduces the life expectancy in Africa. As Ebola is a problematic disease, the WHO is concerned with it.

Timeline of Events

1976	The first case of Ebola in DR Congo and Sudan (now South-Sudan)
2013 - 2016	Major Ebola outbreak in West Africa
2018 - now	Kivu Ebola epidemic in DR Congo



Previous attempts to solve the issue

There has been an experimental vaccine against Ebola previously. More than 3200 people have been vaccinated in DR Congo. It seemed to work, none of the vaccinated have been infected with Ebola later.

Also, those who are already infected with the illness are first put in quarantine so that they can't infect other people until they are cured.

Possible solutions

A possible solution is to treat the current cases. The virus will however not be completely eliminated, but the chances of the disease contaminating new people get a lot lower if no human is infected anymore.

Another solution is to give funds to the DR Congo, Uganda and other countries with a high risk of Ebola outbreak. With these funds the countries could invest in the promotion of prevention of getting contaminated, or in hygiene.

Finally, a real vaccination against Ebola could be developed. Not only will the virus be fought in sick people, but the virus will be way less transmitted as hopefully everyone is immune to this disease. This has previously been shown with other deadly diseases.

Useful documents

Two security council reports are useful:

30 October 2018: [The Council adopted unanimously a resolution on Ebola in the DRC \(S/RES/2439\)](#)

2 Augustus 2019: [Adopted under the agenda item "peace and security in Africa", this PRST referred to the Ebola outbreak in the DRC and the need to have international cooperation to address it \(S/PRST/2019/6\)](#)



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