Ethics During Health Emergencies

The Good, The Bad and The Project
Interdisciplinary Ethics in Development Research and Practice

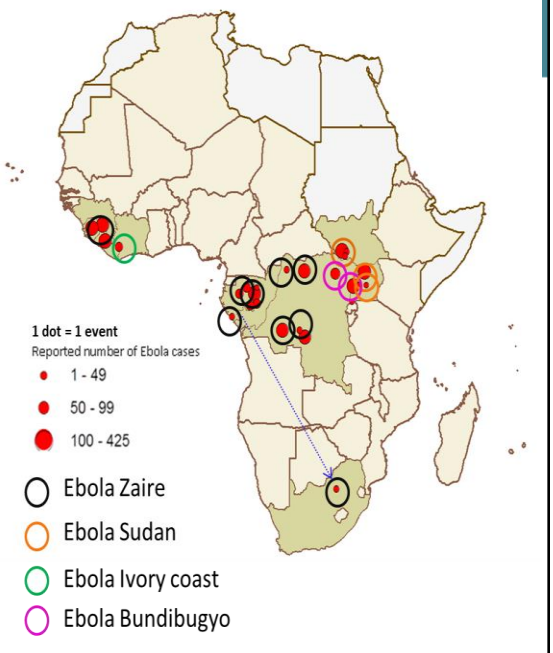
4 July 2019
Oxford, England

Stephen B. Kennedy, MD, MPH, FLCP, FWACP
Co-PI, PREVAIL I EVD Vaccine Clinical Trial
PI, UL-PIRE Africa Center, University of Liberia

BACKGROUND

Ebola Outbreaks in Sub-Saharan Africa

Year(s)	Countries
1976	Sudan, DRC
1977,2018	DRC
1979	Sudan
1994	Gabon, Cote d'Ivoire
1995	Liberia, DRC
1996	Gabon, South Africa
2000-01, 2019	Uganda
2001-2002	Gabon, Congo
2002-2003	Congo
2004	Sudan
2005	Congo
2007	DRC, Uganda
2011	Uganda
2012	Uganda, DRC
2013	Guinea
2014-15	Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Mali, Senegal



Causes of Rapid Spread in West Africa

- Urban characteristics, population mobility, cultural practices and resistance
- Home treatment of patients by health workers
- Inadequate infrastructure to support disaster preparedness
- Limited laboratory capacity, infrastructure & equipment
- Declining human capacity to mount robust response
- Coordination, communication and collaboration not defined
- Delay community engagement, mobilization & empowerment
- Lack of financial resources to support intervention(s)

IDENTIFYING ISSUES DURING PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES

Public Health Considerations During Emergencies...

- Restriction on movement (Cordon Sanitaire)
- Emergency Policy on Cremation
- Emergency Use of Unproven Interventions
- Collection of Biological Samples
- Informed Consents to Manage Infectious Diseases
- Ethical and Regulatory Institutions
- Community Participation
- Vulnerable Populations
- Data Ownership & Access

KEY ETHICAL & REGULATORY CHALLENGES

Multi-Tiered Approval Systems….

- Administrative Approval
- Ethical Approval
- Medical Accreditation Body Approval
- Regulatory Approval
- Political Approval
- Community Approval
- Legal Approval

Community Engagement & Empowerment: Critical Steps for Outbreak Management & Control

Community Related Issues….

- **Informed Consents**
  - Implications
- **Compensations**
  - Payment for research enrollment
- **Community Consents**
  - Embrace Study
- **Community Benefits**
  - Social Responsibility

Public Health Related Issues….

- **Ethical Guidelines, Frameworks or SoPs**
  - Readiness of Ethical Systems
- **Capacity Strengthening**
  - Robust Leadership
- **Placebo vs. Investigational Products**
  - Implications
- **Coordination, Leadership & Partnership**
  - **Trust / Transparency**
- **Data Ownership & Access**
  - Strengthen Health Systems

Sub-Regional Networks..

1st WAC, Guinea, 2015

2nd WAC, Sierra Leone, 2016

Ethics/Regulatory, Liberia, 2015

3rd WAC, Guinea, 2017

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSION….

Significant need to develop ethical guidance during health emergencies

Crucial to strengthen ethical/regulatory procedures to address ethical issues during health emergencies

Community involvement, partnership & country ownership are key ingredients for success

Post-EVD period creates window of opportunity to rebuild a resilient health system

Access to data to strengthen public health systems

DO WE WANT SUCH A SCORELINE..?